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VOLUME XVI

ADOLF WILBRANDT
LUDWIG ANZENGRUBER
PETER ROSEGGER
KARL SCHÖNHERR

THE GERMAN CLASSICS

Masterpieces of German Literature

TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH

Patrons' Edition

IN TWENTY VOLUMES

ILLUSTRATED

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VOLUME XVI

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Selections from "Forest Home."

Edmund von Mach, Ph.D.:
Faith and Fireside.

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ADOLF WILBRANDT*

By CHARLES WHARTON STORK, PH.D.
Instructor in English, University of Pennsylvania

GERMAN literature of the nineteenth century has two principal characteristics. These are: first, an unusual closeness to the life of the people; and second, the power of assimilating the Greek and Latin classics, and of reproducing their figures with renewed vitality. These qualities often exist together in the same author; notably in Goethe, with his *Iphigenie* and *Roman Elegies* on the one hand, his *Wilhelm Meister* and his *Ballads* on the other. In *Faust*, of course, both elements are united. Then we ve Mörike writing *Erinna to Sappho* in a thoroughly Grecian spirit, and again, too, in another mood giving us the song of a German peasant girl. The dramatist Grillparzer achieved nearly equal success with classic legend and with Austrian history, and the list might be continued indefinitely. In the past generation few writers have cultivated both of these qualities with more ardor than has Adolf Wilbrandt.

Wilbrandt was born August 24, 1837, at Rostock, a picturesque town in Mecklenburg by the Baltic Sea. His father was a professor of philology in the university there, and the son acquired early an unquenchable passion for knowledge. At the age of twenty-one he became a Doctor of Philosophy, his favorite subjects being history, languages, art, and metaphysics; his favorite author, Plato. But the young man was not destined to remain in a fugitive and cloistered virtue. Of himself he writes: "From patriotism I became a journalist, from natural impulse a poet.''

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* The writer of this biographical sketch wishes to thank Wilbrandt's son, Professor Robert Wilbrandt, of the University of Tübingen, for his assistance in preparing it.

In 1859 Wilbrandt undertook the varied and exacting duties of newspaper work. His home was then at Munich, where he became intimately associated with an artistic circle, including such men as Paul Heyse and Franz von Lenbach. But eager though he was at first, the incipient poet eventually found out that journalism did not suit him. He was wearied by ''the eternal monotony of eternal change.'' He thereupon made his début in literature by an excellent book on the dramatist Heinrich von Kleist. Following this came his novel *Spirits and Mortals,* a melodramatic work, full of ill-regulated genius. But the enthusiast had overtaxed his powers, and suffered in consequence a nervous breakdown. In his convalescence Wilbrandt resolved henceforth to live in art, ''the realm of eternal things,'' and he at once put his resolution into effect by a long sojourn in Italy with Heyse, Lenbach, and other artistic friends.

Wilbrandt returned to Munich in 1872 and there resumed creative writing with a number of light comedies on contemporary society and artist life. The best of these is probably *The Painters,* with its tomboy heroine who wishes to forget her sex and live among the artists as a ''good fellow.'' However, these comedies were written merely as a relief, until the dramatist should have mastered his craft and fully recovered his health. His next serious work consisted of several classic plays on subjects from Roman history. Wilbrandt was no doubt turned in this direction by having to adapt for the modern stage a number of Greek tragedies, besides plays of Calderon and Shakespeare. The most interesting of his original tragedies was *Arria and Messalina.* In general this form of drama seems today rather artificial in its attempt to infuse modern feeling into historic personages, though in Wilbrandt's case this fault is partly redeemed by great smoothness and beauty of style. At the time, the author achieved an immediate success, and from then on until the end of his life he continued to write with unremitting vigor.

It would be impossible in this brief article to give any adequate idea of Wilbrandt's chief publications. Besides plays he wrote a score of excellent novels, several volumes of short stories, numerous political articles, criticisms of Hölderlin and Reuter, and a fair amount of lyric poetry. In 1881 Wilbrandt was made director of the "Burg Theatre" at Vienna, one of the greatest honors in the German theatrical world. In 1884 he was decorated and given personal nobility by the king of Bavaria. In 1887 he resigned his position at Vienna, after a most successful directorship, to write more at leisure in his native town of Rostock. During his connection with the "Burg Theatre" Wilbrandt had married Auguste Baudius, a celebrated Austrian actress. In the following years he produced his most mature and lasting work, notably his greatest play, *The Master of Palmyra,* which appeared in 1889. On his seventieth birthday a number of noted authors, his personal friends, compiled a volume in his honor, to which was prefaced a letter of Chancellor Von Bülow. Four years later, on June 14, 1911, he died in the midst of new plans and enterprises.

Professor R. M. Meyer thinks that the chief quality of Wilbrandt's works is that of charm. If this view be accepted, the charm has surely come of right, for few men have so agreeably impressed their personality upon those who knew them. But this charm, both in the man and in his works, is united with a sense of dignity and high intellectual power. All of these characteristics are apparent in the portrait by Lenbach — one of his best — painted when the poet was twenty-eight. The forehead is high and majestic, the features classically delicate, the eyes remarkably deep and lustrous. Richard Voss gives us the following personal description: "At the very outset I had the feeling as if I were speaking with a sage of ancient Greece; I felt myself at once a youth, his scholar. My love toward him grew as I spoke to him and he listened. In his presence my heart was quieted and made happy — for the first time in a long while. At the same time I enjoyed his presence as one enjoys looking at a work of art. His spiritual brow, heavy with thought; his earnest eyes, full of light, which looked penetratingly into one's soul; the charm of his smile, the melody of his voice — he was a splendid representation of manhood.'' One of Wilbrandt's fellow-citizens of Rostock adds an account of the poet at home. '' Whoever had the privilege of entering his living-room, took away an impression never to be forgotten of the spirit of classic beauty which pervaded it. Casts after the antique, wonderful reproductions of Michelangelo from the Sistine Chapel, long rows of his beloved books . . ., and then the master himself. . . . With unaltered youth the dark, fiery eyes shone in the gloriously modeled poet's countenance, the soft wavy hair was hardly gray. . . . The master fitted into the world of ancient beauty that surrounded him.'' To this we need only add that he was a most generous and inspiring friend, a lifelong lover of life — its griefs and trials, as well as its joys and triumphs, — in brief a man happy in himself and in every human relationship. It was said of him that he died young because he could never grow old.

The personality of the man has been dwelt upon somewhat at length because only thus can we form an idea of his writings, and more particularly of *The Master of Palmyra*. Enough has been said to indicate how truly a Hellene was Wilbrandt. On the other hand he was a thorough student of his native province and country, a loyal Mecklenburger and a most patriotic German. Prince Von Bülow goes so far as to say that the fundamental note in his work is a strong and faithful love for his German home and for the German people. As an especial admirer of Plato, Wilbrandt is an idealist; but as he was also deeply rooted in his native soil, he always supports his theories by an adequate and sympathetic knowledge of human nature.

In general we may say that Wilbrandt's novels and comedies are German in character, and the tragedies Greek. His dominant interest is intellectual rather than emotional. The summary of a given plot is therefore likely to impress the unfamiliar reader as colorless and abstract, but, as Professor Meyer says, Wilbrandt nearly always overcomes the dangers of a "thought-novel" by incorporating his idea into a living character. His people are real, but not as a rule very individual. His style, both in prose and verse, is exceptionally lucid, compact and finished. Again to quote Dr. Meyer, he combines "passionate earnestness of soul with magical grace of form." A healthy humor and exquisite good taste cause him to avoid mawkishness on the one side and crude realism on the other.

Wilbrandt's novels are nearly all set in contemporary Germany. In them he often combats exaggerated modern notions. For example, in *Hermann Ifinger* he attacks sensuous realism in the painting of the "Makart period," in *Easter Island* he explodes a Utopia planned on the ideals of Nietzsche. He has a peculiar gift of describing the education of his characters by each other and by life, exemplifying the hope, as he puts it, of winning men "to beauty, morality, activity, intellectuality, and finally—to unity." He is notably tolerant and optimistic. Among the best of his novels not already mentioned are *The Rothenburgers* and *Franz,* in which he celebrates the character of his native land. He believes that of modern men the German is not only the simplest and most normal, but is also the natural leader of the world toward the future ideals of the race.

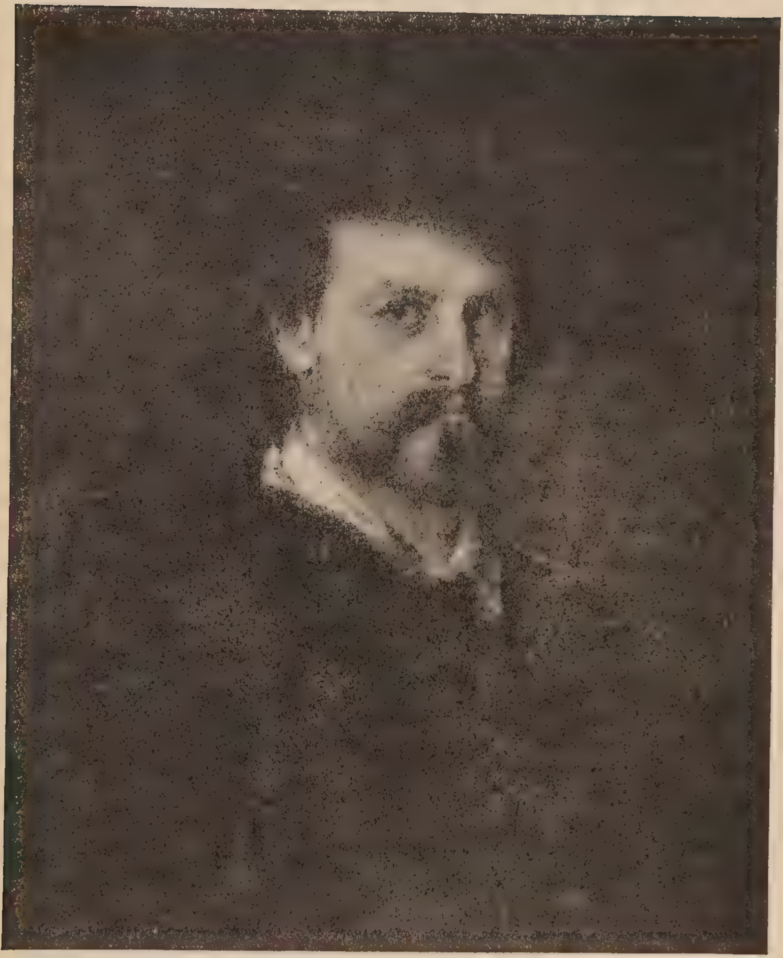
The range of subject and setting in Wilbrandt's plays is much wider. Besides the modern comedies and the Roman tragedies already mentioned, he has plays, for instance, of the Nibelungen story (*Kriemhild*), of England in the time of James I. (*Robert Kerr*), of Swiss medieval history (*The Conspirators*), of renaissance and modern Italy (*Giordano Bruno* and *Assunta Leoni*). In all cases

Wilbrandt is more interested in the "soul problems" involved than in the mere action, and this is perhaps a reason why, despite the refinement of the author's dramatic technique, only one of his serious plays still holds the stage. The richest and most beautiful of the plays to read are *Timandra* and *Hairan;* the former centering around the death of Socrates, the latter reverently depicting a Syrian prophet so similar to Christ that its production was forbidden by an over-zealous censor.

Some doubt exists as to whether on the whole Adolf Wilbrandt is greater as a novelist or as a playwright, but on one point all critics are clear; namely, that *The Master of Palmyra* is not only his masterpiece but is one of the best plays of its generation in German literature. It is a "thought-play," but it is a thought-play that will act, and is acted today on the best stages of Germany. Its full meaning and beauty can only be perceived by a careful and sympathetic reading, and this is not because the style is involved or obscure. The difficulty of appreciation arises from the fact that the dramatic interest of the parts may draw our attention from the deep central motive of the whole. The play presents two worlds, a material and a spiritual, and its chief distinction is the clearness with which we are made to see into the latter through the former.

The dominant idea of the drama is one of universal truth and significance: namely, the welcomeness of death after we have lived our natural lives, and the consequent folly of wishing to live beyond our generation. Apelles, the "Master," a young architect and warrior, declares that if his vigor of mind and body be preserved, he desires to live forever. This wish is miraculously granted, and the play develops as a struggle between the hero's love of life and the wisdom of our mortal destiny. After surviving all his friends and kindred Apelles learns that

He only truly lives, who lives in others,—
Who grows in them, in them renews himself.



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Franz von Lenbach

ADOLF WILBRANDT

Parallel with this thought is the Hindu belief in the transmigration of souls. In each act of the play, while the hero proceeds seemingly unaltered, he is accompanied by another spirit, always appearing in a different form. While the soul of Apelles persists in one body, this more volatile essence passes through five separate personalities. On the stage the part is taken throughout by the same actress, and nothing is more charming than the delicate identity which runs through the changing characters. By means of this second soul Apelles learns that

> The vital spirit leaps from form to form;
> Narrow is man's existence, one shape only
> Mid thousands can it seize on and evolve,
> Can hold but that; then let it strive not toward
> The teeming ocean of eternity,
> Which only God can fill.

One might well doubt whether a play could successfully be built on such a philosophic theme. The answer lies in the triumphant performance of the feat. *The Master of Palmyra* is carefully proportioned, consisting of four minor plays, a prologue and an epilogue. The first four scenes of Act I compose the prologue, and nearly the whole of Act V the epilogue. Between these are four episodes in the life of the hero, unconnected dramatically save by the mystical figure of Pausanias, the "Care-Releaser," who appears at the end of each as the harbinger of death, and in each demands of Apelles whether he still desires to live forever. The more feminine soul that accompanies the "Master" is first Zoe, a Christian enthusiast; then Phoebe, a Roman girl, his mistress; then Persida, his wife; then the youth Nymphas, his grandson; finally Zenobia, a humble benefactress of the poor.

The success of the whole is founded above all upon the moral elevation and spiritual consistency of the main character of the play, Apelles, a character in which we easily detect traits of Wilbrandt himself. We have alluded to Wilbrandt's passionate love of life. He once said he had been so richly blessed with happiness that he would not complain even if the heaviest grief came upon him. Note the words of Apelles:

> Though life a hundred times with rage and hate
> Should come, with howling madness and with grief,
> I would defy it, hold it, cling unto it.

But Wilbrandt the philosopher saw in the end the deeper truth of the old Greek epitaph: "I was naught, am naught; Do thou who livest, eat, drink, jest and follow." At the end of Act I we see that the love of beauty is a part of the "Master's" religion; Wilbrandt himself believed that the cultivation of art and science was a moral duty of the modern man. Observe, too, the attitude of religious tolerance: the bigot is made hateful, whether he be pagan or Christian. The poet's love of teaching is shown in the scene with Nymphas. And throughout the play there is a spirit of earnestness and nobility in the hero which could only be sustained by a man who, in the words of Milton, was "himself a true poem."

The other characters also are full of interest. Of the companion soul which begins as Zoe no more need be said; its changing loveliness is like that of a butterfly, so much a part of its motion that it cannot be analyzed. But the mother with her patient solicitude, and Longinus with his philosophy: "On the poison-tree of life grow two good fruits: wisdom and friendship"—how clearly they are indicated! There is a fine crusty flavor in the cynicism of Timolaus, and Septimius is a masterly bit of subtle sketching. Besides this, each episode is dramatically effective, beginning quietly and rising imperceptibly to a climax. The poetry is rather one of thought than of imagery, the action being too rapid to allow much background.

In all of his works Wilbrandt rather creates a new, ideal life than imitates the life about him, and in *The Master of Palmyra* this is particularly true. The setting in the "queen city of the desert" prepares the reader for a romantic development. The time, too, the days when the Roman Empire was fluctuating between Christianity and the ancient gods, is sufficiently remote and alluring. As models the poet had the fanciful plays of Raimund and Grillparzer, and such works of Hebbel as *Gyges and his Ring,* but he surpassed his predecessors in breadth of design and consistency of detail. It is hardly being too bold to say that since *Faust, The Master of Palmyra* is the greatest imaginative play in German literature.

ADOLF WILBRANDT

THE MASTER OF PALMYRA

A Dramatic Poem in Five Acts

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

Apelles, *the "Master of Palmyra"*
Longinus, *his friend*
Pausanias, *the Lord of Death, a symbolic figure*
Publius Saturninus, *a Roman general*
Timolaus
Julius Aurelius Vahballat *Noble citizens of Palmyra*
Septimius Malku
Jamblicus, *son of Longinus*
Herennianus, *leader of the Christian community in Palmyra*
Nymphas, *grandson of Apelles*
Sabbaeus, *an insurgent against the Christian rule*
Agrippa, *a Christian, citizen of Palmyra, son of Jarchai*
Maeonius, *an old man*
First Citizen of Palmyra *The* First Citizen *is afterward known as* Jarchai
Second Citizen of Palmyra
Slave of Apelles
An Old Man
A Blind Man
A Voice
Bolana, *mother of Apelles*
Zoe, *a Christian enthusiast*
Phoebe, *a Roman girl*
Persida, *sister of Herennianus*
Tryphena, *daughter of Persida*
Zenobia, *a prophetess*
Slave of Bolana
A Woman
Priests, soldiers, people of all classes, male and female slaves

Place: *In or near Palmyra. Time of the Roman Empire before and after Constantine.*

THE MASTER OF PALMYRA (1889)

TRANSLATED BY CHARLES WHARTON STORK, PH.D.

Instructor in English, University of Pennsylvania.

ACT I

In the desert near Palmyra. Complete desolation; low yellow cliffs shut in the background and make a sort of cave, before which a rough slab of rock is arranged as a resting-place.

SCENE I

ZOE *enters left, in simple white costume, a veil or kerchief round her face. She walks languidly as if exhausted. Looks dully about.*

ZOE. I've lost my way.— No tree, no spring; naught else
But dreary solitude. My limbs are faint,
And with the burning glare of yellow sand
And steely heavens mine eyes grow dim; nor yet
Do I behold Palmyra.— Here I'll rest.
[*Sits down on the bench of rock.*]
O soundless desert! all thy waves are sleeping.
Each living thing is still, except the eagles
That circle noiseless in the sea-blue air
As if they sailed to distant shores unseen,
Like mighty beings whom no thirst consumes,
No weariness weighs down.— O heavenly spirits! —
Should such be passing o'er this desert sea —
Be near me, waft me coolness with your wings,
Make strong my heart and guide me on my way.

A pale, sick Woman *and a blind and feeble* Old Man, *both ill-clad, enter left, walking painfully. The* Woman *leads the* Old Man, *who coughs feebly from time to time. The* Woman *carries some half-withered flowers which she lays on the ground near the bench; then with arms crossed she bows deeply toward the cliff.*

Woman (*somewhat impatiently*).
You too must bow.
Old Man. What, are we there?
Woman. Have I
Not told you so? (*Raising her voice.*) Come forth, oh Cavern-Dweller.
Where art thou?
Blind Man (*coughing*). Come, ah come!
Zoe (*in surprise*). Whom do ye call?
Woman (*looking distrustfully at* Zoe).
The aged hermit here.
Zoe (*gazing about in astonishment*).
What, mid these rocks?
Woman (*more confidentially*).
Were you no stranger, you would hardly ask.
Hermits inhabit the Egyptian desert
Amid the rocks, and so does this man here.
(*More softly.*)
Yet do the wisest people of Palmyra
Think him no mortal, but a mighty spirit,
The Lord of Life. Seldom he shows himself;
And, if he will not, we must needs go back.
Then too, alas! instead of him may come
The other, the Black Spirit whom we hate,
(*Yet more softly.*)
The Lord of Death.
Zoe (*smiling incredulously*).
You deem so?
Woman (*pushing the blind man*).
Call him, you.
Blind Man (*coughing, in a weak voice*).
Come Lord, ah come.

WOMAN. He's chirping like a cricket.
[*She bows again deeply, with crossed arms.*]
Appear! oh Lord of Life, to us poor mortals.

SCENE II

PAUSANIAS *steps suddenly from behind the cliff, as out of a cleft. He is pale, shrouded in black from head to foot.*

PAUSANIAS. What would you here? While all Palmyra else
Is thinking only of her warrior band,
Who fight for you against the Persian host,
What seek you for yourselves?
WOMAN (*bending even more deeply*).
Great Lord, oh give
Some remedy, some blessing, some enchantment
So that I die not. I am sick; thou seest it—
PAUSANIAS. I see.
WOMAN. My suffering! My sore disease!
The doctors say: There's nothing that can help you,
Submit. But I have crawled here painfully
And slowly, almost dying on the way.
PAUSANIAS. And yet, oh strange and miserable creature,
You still would live, you crave not for relief
From this your great distress and tribulation?
WOMAN. One yet would gladly live, oh Lord. And death
Is dreadful.
PAUSANIAS (*to the* OLD MAN).
Well, and you, so old and blind?
OLD MAN (*coughing*).
Give but a remedy, that we may live.
PAUSANIAS. Fools! ye none the less must perish,
Perish as your fate ordains.
Think you that the Lord of Being
Is so lavish of the holy
Precious gift of life, that he
Lets it molder in such rotten,
Brittle and corrupted vessels?

Know, the withered leaf must fall
That the new may bud and burgeon!
BLIND MAN. That is hard! — And yet they say
To some lucky man or other
Life immortal may be given.
PAUSANIAS (*sternly*).
Might *I* rule, 'twould fall to no man.
One, however, shall attain it:
Only one by God's high pleasure,
No one else may gain this goal.
WOMAN. Lord, where is he? Lord, when comes he?
PAUSANIAS. E'en today.
WOMAN. What, hither?
PAUSANIAS. Hither.
WOMAN. *I* am here.
PAUSANIAS. But 'tis not you.
(*To the* OLD MAN.) No, nor you. Be off! — So many
On the battle-field today
Died in combat with the Persians,
Young men in their bloom,— and you,
Withered leaves, would you not fall?
Go!
WOMAN (*staring at him, suddenly cries out*).
Alas!
BLIND MAN. What is't?
WOMAN (*whispers, trembling*). The Lord of
Death it was that spoke with us.
We must fall then, we must perish.
BLIND MAN. We must perish!
WOMAN. Yes, 'tis he.
I did scan him, and I knew him;
With his pale eyes coldly gazing
How he pierced me to the heart!
We must perish —
PAUSANIAS (*commandingly*). Get ye back
To Palmyra!

OLD MAN (*trembling, coughing*).
Yes, we're going.
[*The two, hand in hand, slink out, left, without looking back.*]

SCENE III

PAUSANIAS. Pitiable slavish creatures,
Dust-born children of mankind!
Like to limpets of the ocean
Fastened on a slippery rock,
So they cling to bare existence;
Suffer and endure, but die not.
ZOE (*who has risen and turned back, steps forward; quietly*).
Nay, not all.
PAUSANIAS. What, thou so young a maiden,
Thou fear'st not death?
ZOE. Not I.
PAUSANIAS. Well said. So vaunt
A many, proud or spiritless; but trust me,
'Tis light to say what scarce can be made good.

From behind the rock there steps, as did PAUSANIAS, *a noble-looking* OLD MAN, *with white hair but with a fresh youthful countenance, clad in yellow of the color of the desert.*

PAUSANIAS. Ask him!
ZOE. Who is he?
PAUSANIAS. Mightier he than thou.
The wise man whom Palmyra's fools were seeking.
[*The* OLD MAN, *with mild and friendly mien, advances toward* ZOE, *who bows reverently before him.*]
OLD MAN. Thou wanderest from Damascus through the desert.
What drives thee to Palmyra?

ZOE (*simply and quietly*). God's decree.
I go to preach the tidings of salvation.
OLD MAN. Unto the heathen?
ZOE. Yes.
OLD MAN. A Christian?
ZOE. Yes.
OLD MAN. The Spirit drives thee?
ZOE. Thou hast said.
OLD MAN. Thou fear'st not
To face these heathen? What if they should spurn
And hate thee? What if they destroy
Thy tender life with stones?
ZOE. God's will shall guide
Both hearts and stones alike.
OLD MAN. And what if God
Should prophesy unto thee by my lips
That thou today shalt stain with maiden blood
Palmyra's earth? Should tell thee that thine eye
Must needs be quenched in darkness ere the night,
If thou Palmyra seest?
ZOE. I dread.— And yet
I wish to see it, father. Then ere day
I'll be in Paradise.
OLD MAN. If some false dream
Should cheat thy credulous soul? Should'st thou sleep on
And never waken?
ZOE (*staring at him*). Wherefore questionest thou
My soul so deeply? — Thou! who art thou, then?
[*Soft mysterious music.* ZOE *listens astonished, but with visibly wearied senses and the look of one gradually falling asleep.*]
ZOE. The air breathes music.— In mine ear 'tis day;
But night comes o'er mine eyes. My soul is bright
And dark.

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[*Sinks back on the stone bench, in such a way that* PAUSANIAS *is standing at her head and the* OLD MAN *at her feet. She closes her eyes.*]

ZOE. What happened to me? Who art thou?
OLD MAN. I?—Though I should wish to tell thee,
Thou could'st never understand it,
Or thy spirit comprehend.
O thou spirit, born to die—
PAUSANIAS. Thou must perish—
ZOE (*repeating as in a dream*). I must perish.
OLD MAN. Yet shalt thou behold a wonder.

[*Trumpets and horns at some distance; first a short note like a signal, then a swelling fanfare.* ZOE *listens, slightly raising her head, but with her eyes more and more tightly closed.*]

OLD MAN. Hear'st thou, maiden?
ZOE. Horns are sounding.
War-notes.
PAUSANIAS. Victors home-returning.
MANY VOICES (*behind the scenes*).
Hail the Conqueror! Hail Apelles!
ZOE. Now they're calling.
PAUSANIAS. "Hail the Conqueror!
Hail Apelles of Palmyra!"
OLD MAN. Aye, Apelles of Palmyra!
Come, and let thy spirit's portals
Open! Let thy proudest wishes
Fly forth boldly like to eagles!
VOICES (*as before, but nearer*).
Hail the Conqueror! Hail Apelles!
APELLES (*behind the scenes*).
Silence! Leave me! Praise the gods!
Home!
PAUSANIAS. He's coming!

OLD MAN. Let him come then!
[*Draws a yellow veil from his head and lays it over* ZOE'*s face.*]
Let his eye see no one here,
(*To* ZOE.)
Neither thee, nor him, nor me!

SCENE IV

ZOE seems to sleep, with the OLD MAN *and* PAUSANIAS *motionless behind her to right and left.* APELLES *and* LONGINUS *enter right, in armor;* APELLES *in the prime of manhood,* LONGINUS *still a youth. The music ceases.*

APELLES (*as he enters*).
This way, Longinus.
LONGINUS. What's come o'er you, man?
The others wait for you.
APELLES. Well, let them go;
They know the roads that lead into Palmyra
Without my help. Look back of you. "The Cave
Of Life" they call it.
LONGINUS (*looking around*). 'Tis a dreary place.
APELLES (*pointing to the stone bench*).
You see yon naked block? 'Tis said that he
Who sleeps and dreams thereon shall never die.
(*Smiling.*)
I'd like to prove it, friend.
LONGINUS. A superstition
O' the silly rabble!
APELLES. Who can tell? You said
Yourself that 'twas a miracle today
How mid the throng of foes death found me not.
"You are immortal!" you did shout. (*Gaily.*) And therefore
I'd seek now if some god may not fulfil
The saying of a man.

LONGINUS. And would you then
Live ever, on and on?—Now in your eye
The glow of victory gleams; the sunny goddess
Of Fortune loves and showers on you her blessings;
But—is she constant, think you?

APELLES. Fortune? Fortune?
I know life's burden. Fortune did but hold
The ladder which with panting steps I mounted,
Slow, patient, of good cheer; because for hardship
I feel that I was formed, and bless the toil
As I thereby am blest. Since Work and Pleasure
Are twins, each living only in the other,
I live in both, and they preserve for me
The joy of being, even as sleep and waking
Preserve the form of being. If those black mice,
Trouble and Sorrow come to vex my state—
I know they serve grim Death, I hear them gnaw;
But still my watchmen, those twin friends of mine,
Stalwart and true, can fright the vermin off.

LONGINUS. So you would fain live ever?

APELLES. Ever—while
This power of soul, and strength of arm are mine,
To feel the joy of life and hold it fast!
(*Smiling again.*)
Which lures me to lie down here—
[*He approaches the bench. The soft mysterious music sounds again.* APELLES *remains standing in bewilderment.*]

APELLES. What was that?—
Do you hear music?

LONGINUS. I hear nothing.

APELLES. Nothing?
But still it sounds; nor far, nor near; within there,
And yet outside.— Why shrink or tarry? No;
I've willed it and I'll do't.
[*Goes again to the stone bench; stands suddenly still as if bound.*]
Longinus!

LONGINUS. Yes?

APELLES (*struggling against a sensation of dread*).
A force mysterious! — Before my sight
Is naught but air, and yet — a giant arm
Is stretched before my breast to hold me back,
Letting me not come near yon bench of stone.
(*Summoning his courage, with raised voice.*)
What art thou, Force unseen? Why hinderest thou
My strength of body and my manly will
From here demanding of the gods my fate?

OLD MAN (*without moving*).
That which hinders, fain would warn thee.
Search thy will, and see thou ask not
What may prove to be thy bane!

APELLES (*after listening in astonishment and confusion*).
Hark, Longinus!

LONGINUS. What's the matter?

APELLES. Did you hear it?

LONGINUS. I?

APELLES. Yes, you.
That strange voice, so far — yet near.

LONGINUS. I heard nothing.

APELLES. Yet *I* heard it.
Words I caught, but they resounded
In the hollow of my ears,
Flying off like birds nocturnal
Ere their voice was understood.
Hark!

Old Man (*as before*). Apelles of Palmyra!
Apelles. Clearly am I called by name.
Old Man. Have a care! For what thou seekest,
Thou, and thou alone, shalt win —
So the Almighty hath decreed,
If thou will'st it. But beware!
Endless life may only be
Endless time for vain repenting.
So beware!
Apelles. I hear thee now,
Voice of one that warns unseen;
But thou warnst in vain. A mighty
Blessing cannot grow a curse.
Naught deters me; no, not even
This thy threat. Ye Powers Exalted!
Masters over death and life,
Give but certainty that neither
Soul nor body shall grow weary,
And I press the gift of life
Ever, bridelike, to my heart.
Old Man. Good! 'Twill be as thou desirest.
For the Lord of Life has heard thee,
And he holds thee to this earth.
Apelles. Clearer! Louder! From the distance
Hearing, scarce I comprehend.
Old Man. Marked in forehead thou shalt wander,
Waking without sleep of death —
Zoe (*repeating, as in a dream*).
Waking without sleep of death —
Apelles. Words! Mere words! I cannot grasp them.
Old Man. Thou to all the sons of earth
As a picture, an example
That shall preach the lore of death,
Clear the mystery of living.
From this blessing, grown a curse,
Thou shalt never find redemption,
Till thy spirit — (*Is silent.*)

Zoe (*as before*). Till thy spirit—
Old Man. Dark in silence is the end.
Go and live thou!
Pausanias. Go and live thou!
Apelles (*after a pause*).
Stillness.—Did you hear no voice?
Longinus. None.—You're dreaming.
Apelles. A mad dream.
Like a promise 'twas—but doubtful.
Hearing, I could not be sure.
"Go and live thou!" was the end;
"Go and live thou!" 'twas repeated.
(*With a forced smile, rousing himself.*)
We'll be off, then. Come, let's go!
Aurelius (*calls, behind the scenes*).
Good Apelles!
Septimius (*ditto*). Ho! where are you?
Longinus. Hark, they're calling!
Apelles. Yes, our friends.—
Fare you well then, wonder-cavern.
"Go and live!" is now the word.
(*Smiling.*)
Good, I've heard and will obey it.
To Palmyra, friend Longinus!
[*Exit left, pulling* Longinus *with him.*]
Zoe (*dreaming*).
To Palmyra—
Old Man (*to* Zoe, *solemnly*). Follow him!
Traveling on thy journey death-ward,
Showing him the path of fate.
Thou that givest life so lightly
For thy dream of joy celestial,—
In the name of the Almighty,
To a wondrous work I call thee,
Servant of the Eternal Will.
Thou shalt come again, but not
In this form, for thou shalt pattern
Life eternal ever changing.—

Him to lead and to enlighten
Who in self would fain persist.
Wander thou from form to form,
Eager spirit, quick to alter!
Going forward, though at random,
And in every transformation
Meeting him as new and strange,
Thou unknown and he unknowing,
Till God's purpose be accomplished.
[*Takes the veil from* ZOE's *face.*]
Eye, awaken! Dream, depart!
In the hour of fate appointed
Dimly shalt thou dream this dream.
Blindly o'er the sand thou wentest,
(*Pointing.*)
Seek Palmyra with the others.
Go to perish!

PAUSANIAS. Go to perish!

[*The* OLD MAN *and* PAUSANIAS *disappear; the music ceases.*]

ZOE (*murmuring*).
Go to perish—
[*Awakens suddenly; starts up and stares all about her.*]
Was I here?
Did I sleep? and dream?—I dreamt, sure.
(*Recollecting.*)
Of Apelles—of my spirit—
[*Stares helplessly into space, lifting her hand to her forehead.*]
It has left me.—Daylight fair
All around; within here darkness.
(*As in a dream.*)
"Seek Palmyra with the others"—
With what others? Who commanded?
[*Makes a few steps and takes her bundle from the rock bench.*]

But how strong my wearied limbs are!
Throat and spirit fresh as morn.
Thanks! thou pleasant place of resting,
Fare ye well, ye lovely dreams!
[*Trumpets and horns from the left far off.* Zoe *glances in the direction of the sound.*]
There they go then,—"Seek Palmyra
With the others."—Lord, I follow,
And commend me to Thy will. [*Exit left.*]

[The next three scenes contain nothing pertinent to the main action of the play. In Scene V Bolana, the devoted mother of Apelles, is discovered in front of her house in Palmyra, anxiously waiting for news of the battle. Scene VI introduces Timolaus, the old cynic, who has a bad word for every one except his idol Apelles. The Seventh Scene brings Apelles back in triumph. First he is publicly thanked by the Roman general Saturninus as chiefly responsible for the day's victory over the Persians. Saturninus also mentions that the hero, with his friends Aurelius Vahballat and Septimius Malku, have supplanted the previous weak and unjust government of Palmyra by one based on the consent of the people. Apelles, in returning thanks for his honors, tells that he is of mixed Greek and Syrian blood; on the Greek side a lover of art and an architect, on the Syrian a patriot devoted to the honor of his city Palmyra. The Roman general then decrees that the spoils of victory shall be devoted to a temple of Fortune, which Apelles, the "Master of Palmyra," is to build on a site in full view of his house. After the general's departure the ambitious Vahballat says to Apelles that he supposes they will stand together to preserve their leadership. "To preserve freedom, you mean," answers Apelles. From Timolaus we have learned that Malku is a miser. At the end of the scene Apelles is finally left alone with his mother Bolana.—Translator.]

SCENE VIII

(*As in the three previous scenes*)

An open square in Palmyra. Left, the house of APELLES, *a stone bench before the door. In the right foreground a small olive hedge, behind it the lofty entrance-door of a pillared hall which retires into the wings. In the background several palms on a slight elevation to which steps lead up; still further back is visible part of the city wall and above it a bare, moderately high range of mountains.*

APELLES *and* BOLANA *alone.* PAUSANIAS *steps out on the elevation from the right. He is in Græco-Syrian dress like the others, but with black turban-like head-gear and strikingly pale face.*

BOLANA. You 're coming home now, son?
APELLES. You see I'm here.
BOLANA. Yet not in spirit here.
APELLES. I'm with my *fortune*,
Both present and to come.
[*Looks again toward the site of the future temple; sees* PAUSANIAS.]
APELLES (*aside*). Who's that stands there?
Whence did he come? Just now I noticed no one. (*Goes to* BOLANA.)
What else, impatient mother, would you have
Than me in quiet here?
BOLANA (*diffident and hesitating*). I want to kiss you,—
And then to beg you come.
APELLES. Within?
BOLANA. Why, don't you
Need any rest then?
APELLES (*smiling*). No.
BOLANA. Your wounds?
APELLES. Nor they.
Don't call them "wounds" so proudly, they 're but scratches
And will alas! I fear me, leave no scars
That might recall the exploits of this day.
BOLANA. Then come and rest.
APELLES. Oh, later, mother, later.

BOLANA. Do spare yourself.
APELLES (*smiling*). The ancient mother-song.
BOLANA. You'll *kill* yourself unless you spare yourself —
APELLES (*gently embracing her*).
There, mother, mother. Kill myself? What I
Who'd live forever, and hate nothing more
Than that grim bloodless enemy of man,
The rascal, Death?
[PAUSANIAS *moves and comes slowly nearer.*]
I'd gladly shun him, mother,
Save than I *fear* him not. Who e'er begins
To fear this foe, he ceases then to live.
Come, mother, do not sigh. Who is so happy
As you and I are? Life soars up for us
Toward heaven and with carol of a lark
Foretells us happy days. Just leave me here
And let me hearken all that he predicts,
Then will I come inside — and spare and rest me.
Go, mother, you go first.
(*Kisses her.*)
BOLANA. You should go *now* —
(*Submitting.*)
Still, as you like.
[*He goes with her to the door; she embraces him again.*]
My everything!
[*Goes into the house.* PAUSANIAS *has meanwhile sat down on the bench before the house.* APELLES *advances again.*]
APELLES. Good mother,
Tell me, who's sitting there? — An unknown guest.—
Why do you rub your leg?
PAUSANIAS. 'Tis itching still
From the bad words that you've been throwing at me.
APELLES. Strange fellow, I at you? And when?

PAUSANIAS. Erewhile.
But don't you know me?
APELLES. Yes, I know you now.
You were in camp outside there on the night
When we were stationed opposite the Persians,
Waiting the dawn. Around the fire were seated
Many young warriors — Romans and Palmyrans —
Who listened as you played upon the lyre
And sang, too, as you played. The tune was eerie,
Straight to the marrow through the flesh it stole,
And seemed to breathe along the skin — yet somehow,
I can't tell how, it pleased me.
PAUSANIAS. That I noted.
APELLES. And others even more.
PAUSANIAS. They're lying now
Stretched on the sand, where they hear no more music.
APELLES (*startled*).
What are you saying, man? Whoever hears
Your lyre with joy —
PAUSANIAS. Is hearing his last song;
For what they sing who come to bury him,
That slumbers in his ear.
APELLES. You bloodless visage,
Who were you, then?
PAUSANIAS. He whom you hate, my friend,
"The rascal, Death."
APELLES (*after a pause*). You sit there on the bench
Before my door, and guests one may not scorn;
Therefore I'll use no unkind word with you.
PAUSANIAS. Much thanks.
APELLES. But not from fear.
PAUSANIAS. I know that well.
APELLES. Why grace me with this visit then?

PAUSANIAS. Because
So haughtily and boldly you detest me,
As few do of your kind. Of course, my friend,
I've seen a-many clinging to the light;
But at the last a time came when the load
Of life weighed heavily upon their breast,
Till they groaned out: "Come hither, Night and Death,
And roll away this stone." For harder then
Was life to them than death.

APELLES. Pale ghost of night,
Whose joy is but to slay, you cannot feel
The magic strength, the holy glad desire
That glows through me to clasp life to myself.
If in thy stead the Lord of Life stood here —
He whom today I sought, but found him not —
And offered endless being on this earth,
Here in this body, ne'er to be your prey,
I'd answer: "Give it me!"

PAUSANIAS. A haughty word.

APELLES. A true man's word.

PAUSANIAS. Give heed; he'll come perhaps
And take you at your boast. But otherwise —

SCENE IX

1ST CITIZEN (*outside, left*).
Come, let her speak no more. Away with her!

2D CITIZEN (*ditto*).
No, let her speak and tell us of salvation! —
Don't be confused, but speak!

APELLES. What's all this noise
And strife after so hard a day?

ZOE (*outside*). Ye men
And women of Palmyra! —

1ST CITIZEN (*outside*). No, be still there!
Out with her from Palmyra, from our town!

MOB (*outside*).
Out with her! Out with her!
1ST CITIZEN. Out with the Christian!
Or stone her, stone her!
2D CITIZEN. We will save you yet!
This way! This way!
[SECOND CITIZEN *and others hurry past from left, dragging* ZOE *with them.* FIRST CITIZEN *and a great mob rush after them.*]
APELLES. What's here? Whom hunt ye so
Along our streets?
2D CITIZEN. Help her, Apelles, help!
1ST CITIZEN. Away with her! Seize her!
MOB (*confusedly*). Away with her!
Strike her to earth!
APELLES (*with mighty voice*). Stand back! That man is dead
Who dares to touch her! — I, Apelles, son
Of Hermes, say it. I protect her here!
[*General silence.*]
APELLES. Who are you, maiden?
2D CITIZEN. Hail, most noble sir!
This maiden —
APELLES. 'Tis herself I ask.— Say on.
Who and whence are you?
ZOE (*softly, with modest dignity*). Zoe is my name.
I come here from Damascus through the desert.
For when the spirit moveth me —
APELLES. What spirit?
The wild enthusiasm of Nazareth
That still unwearied wanders through the world,
From town to town, from door to door, and bears
A tale of sin and godhead crucified,
Preaching damnation unto all who doubt?
ZOE. We do but what the Holy Spirit's voice
Within commands us. We receive salvation
That we may preach it; only stones keep silence.
In fear and trembling all the sons of men

Long for the revelation, are athirst
For freedom from the fetters of this world
And for the bliss that waits the sons of God.
And who can bring, shall that one hesitate
Because it vexes him or him?

APELLES. We hold
Here in Palmyra to the elder gods
And do not call to you. In all the towns
O' the Roman Empire ye have spread abroad,
But in our desert land ye do not thrive.
Then stay outside! Preach, multiply and grow
Like grains of corn — only within our walls
Leave us to serve in peace the elder gods!

1ST CITIZEN. That's what I say.

APELLES (*imperiously*). Be still!

ZOE. What is Palmyra?
'Tis not alone the wise, the fortunate;
For sorrow and affliction walk your streets,
And anguish of the soul that yearns for balm.
To these I come here, as the Lord commands me.
Will you forbid my coming?

APELLES. Marvelous creature:
So young and earnest; fair yet strange to earth.
You, maiden, to my thought should rather marry
Than roam unwed, a pilgrim through the world.

ZOE. We each must live, methinks, as 'tis ordained.
Who weds, must learn to please a mortal bridegroom;
Who doth not wed should suit her life to please
The holy will of Heaven. The Lord hath called,
And shall not I obey?

APELLES. A woman, weak.

ZOE. 'Tis not alone the strong, the wise are chosen;
They that seem weak and foolish to the world
Are called of God, that they may turn to shame
The wise and strong.— Yet, pray you, be not angry
At what I say.

APELLES (*haughtily*). No. What are you to me?
Beware though of the others. Ye are grown
Too great in the realm, both emperor and people
Are threatening, if ye learn not to be still.

ZOE. I know: a new decree of blood hangs o'er us;
The Emperor Diocletian is about
To raise his sword against us. Yea, the heathen
Wax angry with us, as they learn to fear us;—
But we fear nothing. They may battle with
The Lamb, and yet the Lamb will overcome them.
God is with us!

1ST CITIZEN. Who are you, to blaspheme?
Vagabond! Hussy! Keep your tongue in order!

ZOE (*with a questioning look at* APELLES).
This man protects me.

APELLES. Yes, but have a care.
Try not, as Christians do, with scorn and pride
To rouse the lion, that he rend the lamb;
Make not yourself a sacrifice. A lamb
Is easily slain—

ZOE. 'Tis well. I fear it not.
(*Laying her hand on her arm.*)
This is but dust. The Children of the Lord
Have never loved their lives even till death;
Therefore are they with God.

APELLES. Unthinking girl!
Do you cast off this present life so lightly
For that which none has known? your blossoming youth,
The strength and fairness of your limbs; eye, ear
And feeling, thought and love but for a dark
Fancied "Perhaps?"

ZOE. It may be dark to you,
Not me. (*Turns from him.*) Ye men and women of Palmyra,
Follow and hear me! for the day will come.
Leave off idolatry! Your gods are but

Fanciful pictures, stone and bronze, not living,
Not strength, or love, or hope, or yet compassion.
They give no consolation in your grief,
They offer not themselves to cleanse your sin,
They let you perish in eternal death —

1st Citizen. Enough of blasphemy! Silence!

2d Citizen. No, speak on!

Zoe. Why build ye temples? He who made the world
Dwells not in houses that are made with hands
Nor dwells he in the gold-wrought images
Which ye call gods; they are the work of men
And melt away as ye. The temples, too,
As many as ye build, shall fall —

Apelles. Enough!
By thunderous Jove, enough! "The temples fall" —
What are you, miscreant, that you dare to scorn
What you lack eyes to see and comprehend?
Splendor of temples, glorious forms of gods,
And noble art —

1st Citizen. Away with her!

Apelles. Why do ye,
Blind that you are, cry out on eyelids thus
And shriek "Fall down!" because you cannot build? —
Away with you, ye enemies to this world!
Ye timid lambs that mock at Cæsar's self,
Ye shaven pale-faces with bloodless veins,
Which yet are full of poison —

Zoe. Cease, Apelles!
No more!

Apelles. Away with you! Palmyra needs
None of your like. Away from out these walls!

1st Citizen. Apelles too condemns. Away with her!

Mob. Out from Palmyra! [*They seize her.*]

Zoe (*tears herself free*). No, I've done no wrong.
(*Drawing back from the oncoming mob and mounting the steps in the background.*)

Seize not on me, but purify your hands,
Ye sinners! Are you clean? Is not Palmyra,
Your boasted city, filled with every crime?
The flesh your god, the body your true temple —
1st Citizen. Stone her!
Mob (*several*). Aye, stone her!
Zoe. Wherefore shout ye so,
World-lust in heart, and blood-lust on your lips?
Ye god-forsaken creatures,— empty clouds
Borne by the wind of chance —
Mob (*confusedly*). Make her be still!
She shall not live!
[*A fresh mob comes from the wings right and left, above, partly armed with swords, bows and arrows.*]
Zoe. Ye savage waves of ocean
That foam on high with shame . . . The angels cry
Woe, woe upon you for your evil deeds!
And Babylon shall fall, Palmyra fall —
1st Citizen. Throw stones! Shoot arrows! Swords here!
Apelles (*pressing forward in the throng*).
Hold your hands!
No further!
Mob (*both on and off the stage*).
She must perish! She must perish!
[*They lift stones and throw them; arrows fly from the wings to the stage.*]
Zoe. The Lord — (*Struck by an arrow, she sighs forth*) Ah Saviour! (*Collapses.*)
Apelles. Hold your hands! — She's falling.
Accursèd murderers! Which of you has struck her?
[*Forces the mob back, raises* Zoe; *her eyes are closed.*]
Apelles. Let no one touch her!

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[*Half dragging her he brings her to the house. She lays a hand upon her heart and sinks from out his arms.*]

ZOE. I am dying; leave me.

[*The mysterious music of the earlier scenes begins again.* ZOE *opens her eyes and sees* APELLES *kneeling beside her. Her expression changes to a deep, mysterious look.*]

ZOE. 'Tis you — as in my dream.— Why blame the others?
You gave me up and let them work their will.
Yet God will punish you in what you covet:
For the Lord of Life hath heard you,
And to earth securely holds you —

APELLES (*staring at her discomposedly*).
Who are you? — So it sounded from the cavern.

ZOE. Marked in forehead thou shalt wander,
Waking without sleep of death.
But I must die — [*Music ceases.*]

APELLES. No, if you are a spirit,
'Tis an illusion, and you cannot die.

ZOE (*gazing with transfigured look toward heaven*).
And then there was a voice went forth from heaven,
Which said: 'tis finished.— Oh ye martyred saints,
As ye with sound of singing went to death,
So I would sing.
(*Sings with firmer, then with weakening voice.*)
"Oh God, be thou my judge,
And do thou guide my cause against this throng
Unrighteous, and deliver me" — (*Dies.*)

[SECOND CITIZEN *and others kneel down by her, some weeping, some covering their faces.* APELLES *stares at her as if unable to comprehend.*]

APELLES. By Zeus!
But that is death.

[PAUSANIAS, *previously hidden in the crowd, now stands behind* ZOE.]

PAUSANIAS. It is.

APELLES. Are you still here?

PAUSANIAS. You have now what you wished for. Fare you well. [*Turns to go.*]

AURELIUS (*behind the scenes*).
Way for the governor Publius Saturninus!

ACT II

A room in the house of APELLES *at Palmyra, adorned with frescoes and statues in the Græco-Roman style, joined by a row of pillars at the back to a second chamber, through the door of which one looks out into a small garden. Entrances (closed by tapestries) right and left; the second chamber has also entrances on both sides. In the front room is a table, set, and surrounded by beautiful chairs.*

[Scenes I and II, though witty, are merely introductory to the action. We learn that the time is some twenty years later, but just the day of the year when Zoe was killed. The Christians, under the Emperor Constantine, are in power, and Apelles' intimate, the politician Aurelius Vahballat, has joined the new religion. To the distress of his mother Apelles has brought from Rome as his mistress the beautiful Phoebe, with whom every one (especially the vain miser Septimius) is in love. In a prose scene, reminding one much of Falstaff, the cross-grained but keen-witted epicurean Timolaus rails at all in Palmyra except Apelles; at the end he brings Septimius into especial ridicule. Timolaus, Longinus, Aurelius and Septimius are on the stage at the beginning of the next scene.— TRANSLATOR.]

Scene III

(*As in the two previous scenes*)

Apelles *and* Phoebe *enter from the second chamber;* Apelles *but little aged, more richly dressed than in* Act I: Phoebe *in sumptuous Roman attire. The part is taken by the same actress who played* Zoe; *but in dress, in the arrangement of the hair, and in wordly appearance she looks as different as possible.*

Apelles. How? Is there war?—What's wrong?
Phoebe. Septimius angry?
Fie on you!—Clear your looks!
Septimius. This fellow here,
This quarrelsome—
Phoebe. Hush! I will not hear of quarrels,
Nor see your gracious countenance o'ercast.
Quick, smile again, or else I'll turn my back
This day upon Palmyra and be gone
To my beloved Rome.
Apelles. Look out! Septimius.
Phoebe's in earnest. For this hour and more
She only speaks of Rome, yearns for the Tiber,
Rails at Palmyra as the Land of Shades
And says we're all stark mad.
Phoebe. You are so, too.
Jackals no doubt should live here, but not men;
Here, where Palmyra like a dot of green
Lies in a sea of sand, mid mountains bare
And desolate as the ever-empty sky.
"Show me a thing of beauty, my Apelles,
A bit of Paradise," I said, "or else
I'll die." What then? He leads me to a gorge
Where like some ugly giants turned to stone
Rise monuments of the dead: the burial-place
Of the Palmyrans! That's your fairest sight,
The eyelid of your eye!—Alas, my Rome!
Ah, what a fool am I!
Apelles (*somewhat vexed*). You are—in judgment.
Learn first to know the magic of this desert,
Where like a jewel-case Palmyra rests—

PHOEBE (*with a charming gesture lays a hand on his lips*).
Stop! Not so serious. Why did you not stay
In Rome? You were not there a year. They prized
The "Master of Palmyra"—he that built
The temples and arcades—they loved you well
And bade you: "Stay!"—Then why don't you go back?
Why cleave here to the sand?

APELLES. I love Palmyra
And my good mother.
(*Embracing* PHOEBE *tenderly.*)
Ask no more. The wine!
Why do we stand? Sit here and be our queen;
And let this crown, to which our "desert sand"
Gave birth, adorn your fair capricious forehead.
[*Takes a rose garland from the table and places it on her hair. They set themselves to the table; slaves wait upon them.*]

APELLES. Crown yourselves all!

PHOEBE. And drink! I'll show you how.
(*To the slaves.*)
Take off the meats though! When I look at meat
I see that we're but beasts; and for today
We'll bear ourselves like men—nay, like the gods.
You all have eaten, though. (*Smiling.*) If you wish more,
Take of these noble fruits, that smell so sweet
And well might grace the table of the gods.
Send out the meat! The slaves, too! Every one
Shall serve himself; that is the high decree
Of mighty Circe!

AURELIUS. Circe, did you say?

PHOEBE. So was I called in Rome erst: "the enchantress,"—

Though all my magic was my merry mood,
As it shall be today.
(*To the slaves, imperiously.*)
Be off with you!
[APELLES *gives a sign to the slaves, who depart through the second room right and left.*]

PHOEBE. Now we're in Fairyland; my reign begins.
[*Takes from a flower-vase a palm branch, which she raises as if it were a sceptre.*]

SEPTIMIUS. Then must we fear, fair Circe, you'll transform
Us all.

AURELIUS. To beasts.

PHOEBE. Aye truly, whomsoe'er
This wand shall touch, 'twill change at least his name.
And first of all the grave philosopher,
Who thinks but never speaks. (*To* LONGINUS.) How shall I call you?

TIMOLAUS. Call him the pelican, pattern of all thinkers,
The solemnest of sages.

PHOEBE (*laughs*). Good.
(*Touches* LONGINUS *with the palm.*)
Be like
The pelican, be worthy of your model!

SEPTIMIUS. And I, enchantress?

PHOEBE. What's the beast deserves
You for its like? Only the handsomest,
The noble horse.
(*Touches him.*)

APELLES. And I?

PHOEBE. My desert lion
Are you; my not too gentle lord and monarch,
At whom I tremble.
(*Touches his hand, which she then kisses. To* AURELIUS—)

But what name for you,
The wise man of the state?—The eagles look
Down from on high—

TIMOLAUS (*interrupting*). No, let him be the stork,
Lord of the frog-pond. What is wiser than
The contemplative stork? Who on one leg
Ponders: how will it end, will Constantine
The Christian or Maxentius the heathen
Be victor? If the one, I'll be a Christian;
And if the other, heathen. [APELLES *laughs.*]

AURELIUS (*rising in anger*). How, you nettle?
You want to sting me?—me, the city's lord?
And you, Apelles, will you let this weed
Mock me within your walls?

PHOEBE. O Zeus! so angry—

AURELIUS. My patience is worn out. We've worn the name
Of friends these many years, have he and I—
I mean Apelles; and I held the ladder
To all his honors, helped him to his fame,
Cloaked with the mantle of my dignity
All that was doubtful. What's the thanks I get?
He keeps here this tarantula to sting us—
Even me, the lord, Aurelius Vahballat—
And laughs and nods assent!

APELLES (*has risen, fighting with his indignation*).
You speak not well,
Aurelius Vahballat. Free was ever
The speech within my house; true wit I laugh with;
But poisonous malice here was never hatched.
You "held the ladder" for me? You, for me?—
Is your remembrance drunk?—You cloaked for me
"All that was doubtful"—What was doubtful, pray?
By the great Zeus, speak out.

Aurelius. I pray you, let us
Not here —
Apelles. Where else? We've men of honor here,
Such as you don't see everywhere. Speak out!
What wrong did I commit?
Aurelius. Not wrong —
Apelles. And yet
Not right. By Cerberus! speak out, or else
I'll tear it from your throat.
Aurelius. You're mad with rage.
I only meant the money, when you built
More than had been intended; for the temple
First of the Goddess Fortune at your door,
Then for the colonnade —
Apelles. Go on!
Aurelius. And last
For the six towers that reinforce the wall.
Apelles. What man condemns my work? 'Tis good throughout
And ornaments your city.
Aurelius. And it cost
A fifth more than you reckoned —
Apelles. But it is
A third more strong and beautiful, I got
Never a penny more than was my due.
Why were you silent then, and did not knit
Your brows at me as now, nor yet accused
Me of extravagance before the Council?
Aurelius. I was your friend. The Council and the people
Had pressed you hard, grumbled, or angrily
Demanded, "Pay yourself the extra share
We did not bargain for." Therefore I hushed
The matter up, not to annoy the Master,
And got the money elsewhere as I could,
And what was needed here saved there. So was I
Your friend, (*pointing to* Septimius) and he with me.

APELLES. You acted wrongly,
And I accuse you. I will not beg off
A single penny, nor will I beseech
For favor either you or yet Palmyra.
Give here your false account, for I will pay
My debt, the extra fifth.

SEPTIMIUS. Have you your wits?
You'll be a beggar.

APELLES. Better be a beggar
Than to become your debtor — and your like.
I've seen enough to gall me; I have watched
The new-won freedom often in your hands
Wrenched to the old misuse; I saw how deftly
You swayed the sceptre, but I held my peace,
For ancient friendship willingly forbears,
And I bethought: we all are fallible.
But to be false along with you, to take
Favors from dirty hands? I'd rather creep
Among the snakes or beg before the jackal.
Give me the audit! What Apelles owes,
That should he pay. So house and home farewell,
Farewell the utmost farthing. I can then
But say: Depart! This hand is clean, it took
Nothing from yours and therefore owes you nothing.

PHOEBE. O Zeus! You will not —

APELLES. Cease! My word is rock.
(*To* AURELIUS.)
You'll send to me at once and I will pay.

AURELIUS. If you desire it. "Whom the gods destroy"—
But no, I'll not revile as you do. Have
The last word; else, I fancy, you'll have nothing.
I'll send to you, and your haughtiness will pay.
Farewell! [*Exit rear.*]

TIMOLAUS (*aside to* LONGINUS, *dumfounded*).
The man is mad!

LONGINUS (*aside*). But wise.
PHOEBE. Alas!
What is all this?—Apelles, call him back!
Apelles, let me teach you reason.
APELLES (*harshly*). Hush!
You know not what you say.
(*Goes toward the door, left.*)
LONGINUS. Where?
APELLES. To my mother,
To tell her this before another shall,—
Our pleasure is destroyed. Leave me, I pray,
Until tomorrow!
LONGINUS (*pressing his hand*). Then good-night.
[*Exit* APELLES, *left.*]
SEPTIMIUS. Longinus,
I'm sore perplexed and troubled.
LONGINUS. Let us go.
[*Beckons* TIMOLAUS, *who follows him hesitatingly.*]
TIMOLAUS (*in going, aside*).
A noble man, but mad!
LONGINUS (*ditto, with a gentle smile*). As mad as noble.
One thought in two words. Come.
[*Both exeunt rear.*]
PHOEBE (*holds* SEPTIMIUS *back as he starts to follow*).
No, you must stay.
Desert me not, Septimius. Ah, ye gods,
But what a stroke from heaven!
SEPTIMIUS. I deplore him,
My foolish friend Apelles.—More than all though
I pity you.
PHOEBE. Then help him.
SEPTIMIUS. You have heard
Whether 'tis possible. He thrust you out.
Your lovely eyes are swimming still with tears.
PHOEBE. How rough he was!—Is all, is all then lost?

SEPTIMIUS. Surely.
PHOEBE. He passed for rich—
SEPTIMIUS. Yes, rich he was.
A fifth of all the cost!
PHOEBE. Poor as a beggar?
SEPTIMIUS. Poor, if not quite a beggar; and at strife
With one all-powerful to do him harm.
PHOEBE. Was ever man so rashly proud?—Apelles,
Apelles! (*Goes toward the door, left.*) No, he'd only thrust me back.
He leaves me here. He knows not if I live.
And poor. Ye gods! Why, poverty is death.
He lets me die here, even at his threshold.
[*Throws herself in a chair, weeps, covering her face with her hands.*]
SEPTIMIUS (*with choking voice*).
I pray you, do not weep. I cannot bear it,
It tortures me at heart. If I were not
Apelles' friend, I'd fall here at your feet
And tell you what I suffer; for the god
O' the bow and arrows has undone me quite,
And I'm defenseless. On my friend's behalf,—
Though sore he wronged me, yet must I be still.
But do not weep, for then my heart mounts up
As high as to my tongue.
PHOEBE. Alas! Apelles.
Alas! my Rome.
SEPTIMIUS. Did you but call on Rome
And not Apelles too, I'd seek to help you,
And dare a word. Then would I say to you:
What do you in Palmyra further, banished
Here in this desert place, which grieves your eye
And makes your heart feel homesick; where foes rule,
Sorrow invades your house, and soon the Persian
Perchance again will levy war—for he

Learns never to keep peace. I therefore think
I too may leave this land with all my treasure
And take my way to your far paradise,
The queen of cities, Rome.

[*She raises her head in surprise, looks at him in silence.*]

Would you come with me,
I'd go at once. Tomorrow; yes, tonight;
Soon as you will. Come with me!

PHOEBE (*after a short silence*). You are base,
And think I too am base, that you speak so.

SEPTIMIUS (*cautiously*).
Forgive. I meant it well. I said not how
My heart desires you; let it break in silence!
I think but: what of you? You that are made
For pearls and roses, gold and happiness,
As in the sand the vine will never flourish,
So you in poverty must droop and die.
And what then of Apelles? He but loved you
Because you sang, you beamed with radiant joy,
And laughed; when you begin to weep and wither,
He'll go to others. Do not wait for that,
But do you go to others —

[*She starts and looks at him unwillingly. He goes on quickly.*]

Not to me.
I spoke not of my heart, nor shall I speak.
Only had you yourself said: let it speak,
I'd have laid all before you — all I am
And all that I possess — and you as empress
Should have commanded all that I call mine.
Of that I do not speak. Merely as guide
Would I companion you to Rome, to save you.
I'll come to you that hour when you shall call;
Submissive, true as no man else on earth,
And yet without a wish.

SCENE IV

APELLES *has entered left, drawing back the curtain, and listening for a time in silent surprise, has not moved. He now advances.*

APELLES (*with wrath still suppressed*). So talks Septimius
And Phoebe hears in silence. (PHOEBE *starts.*)
No, be seated,
And list to him yet further, till he says:
Treachery is holy, faithlessness a virtue,
Apelles but a beggar.

PHOEBE. Sacred gods!
Listen to me, Apelles.

APELLES. Yes, I will;
Not before him, though.
(*To* SEPTIMIUS.)
Wait until she calls,
Then come and rescue her.
(*As* SEPTIMIUS *tries to speak.*)
If you say more,
I shall forget how frank and true you are —
My very friend of friends — and strangle you
Like to a Persian dog. Go dumbly out
And *write* her what you think!

[SEPTIMIUS *goes toward* APELLES *as if to speak; at a beseeching gesture of* PHOEBE *he turns in silence and exit, right.*]

APELLES. And now to you,
Oh Circe lost to shame. My heart you stole,
And witched it to a cooing dove-like heart,
That, fluttering round you, hung upon your finger
And freely sprinkled with the dearest drops
Of its warm blood that little snow-cool hand.
You'd draw the hand away because the drops
No longer flow red gold, but common blood?
Because I now am nothing but this head
And this right-arm to earn in daily toil

By honest means an honest livelihood.
What's honor, or my honor, though, to you?
Or what am I? A statue made of sand,
That pleased you for awhile because 'twas gilded;
The gilding gone, I now am but the dust
Which you will shake from off your fleeing foot
To seek the *man of gold.*

PHOEBE. Have you now chidden
Me long enough, and can you hear a little?
Apelles, churlish bear! what have I done?
Have I been faithless to you? When you left me
I wept for you alone here in distress,
That you're so noble as to be a fool.
If, helpless with despondency, I then
Yielded mine ear to strengthening consolation —
Is that a crime?

APELLES. Seduction then consoles.
O woman!

PHOEBE. He spoke honorably.

APELLES. You think so?
Innocent creature! — Go to Rome, depart
Hence with your man of gold! You shape of air,
Of vapor wrought, and foam and fickleness.
Cling to the solid gold, embrace it, cobweb,
And let yourself be saved ere comes the storm!
Farewell, farewell. My blessing go with you,
The last thing I possess: hate that is born
Of love, regret, compassion and — contempt!

PHOEBE. How madly you do chide. I quiver, tremble,
And yet I can't be angry with you.
(*Sinking before him.*)
Strike me,
If I deserve it! Strike! I do deserve it,
I heard of Rome, and thought: yes, flee to Rome!
I would have dared to die for you, but oh
My woman's blood shrinks at the thought of life

THE RACE FOR HAPPINESS

From the Painting by Rudolf Henneberg

[illegible] PHOTO [illegible] NEW [illegible]

After the brow is wrinkled. Oh Apelles,
How weak a child you love!

APELLES. I love you not.
Stand up!

PHOEBE. You love me still. You're trembling, and
Your harsh-feigned voice is fighting with your tears.

[*Draws him down to a seat, while she remains on her knees.*]

PHOEBE. Sit down. Yes, that way. Now I'll kiss your hands
And kiss your knees as well — my Jupiter!
Or no, my desert lion, wild and fearsome,
Because you scold me so.— Did I deceive you?
At Rome 'mid kisses I did say: I'm fickle,
Free I'll remain. Bethink, the day will come
When Fortune shall take wing! — What if that time
Were here?

[*He seeks to rise; she detains him, kissing his hands again.*]

Oh no, it has not come.— But tell me:
What can I do? I am your chain, your sorrow;
No more your bird, to sing your Fortune back.
Besides, your mother hates me.—

(*As he makes a movement.*)

Hush! I'll not
Scold the good lady whom you love so much.
Yet, why stay here, in the hot desert wind
That wearies me and presses shut mine eyes —
E'en now, you see? — Let's go then! Take me back
To Rome! (*Clasping him.*) Rome!

APELLES (*shakes his head*).
Here I'm rooted — and my mother.
If that is all, depart!

(*Stands up and goes away from her.*)

Phoebe (*rises*). What, rough again;
The lion's thunder?—Well then, we'll remain;
In peace, though, and in unity.
[*Follows him; presses him softly down upon a couch, right; sits by him.*]
But smile!
I am but as I am. What would you? Young,
Yet early ripe; and early wont, a moth,
To fly toward Fortune, and to fear and hate
The groveling worm that mortal men call sorrow.
And therefore—but I'm tired—yet one word more.
I once was good, earnest as ye, all formed
For thought, for virtue, wisdom—what you will.
Within my childish bosom often stirred
The holiest feelings—strangely, secretly,
Like an inheritance from a former life—
I can't find words for it. But (*hesitatingly*) my mother's blood,
Example and temptation—Kiss, forgive me
That I'm this Phoebe that I am, just this one!

Apelles (*kisses her*).
'Tis her I love, whether I would or no.—
But now your eyes are closing like the cups
Of the convolvulus when the sun grows hot.

Phoebe (*sinks upon his breast*).
Too hot it glows today.—I'm like the children;
When they have cried their fill, they fall asleep.
Let me but slumber,—so.

Apelles (*gazing at her, after a pause*). She sleeps indeed.—
Yes, like a child. Fleeing away from sorrow
To dreamland, now she's lying there; her breath
Soft as a whispering wind, above her floats
A perfume as of cedar. . . . Yet so still
And earnest, petrified in sleep, she's like
The *Christian from Damascus.*—Very strange,

That two so different should be so like:
As day from night, frivolity from holiness,
World-love from martyrdom! — But when she died —
The Christian — and with mystic glance proclaimed
"And thou shalt wake without the sleep of death" —
Or did the Lord of Life I summoned say it?
Why does this sleeper, who intoxicates
My heart, remind me of that child of death,
As 'twere the selfsame spirit in both forms? —
My mother comes.

Scene V

Bolana *enters, left, gray and much aged, with quiet melancholy, almost with embarrassment.*

Bolana (*as* Apelles *starts to rise*).
No, stay; don't wake her up.
(*With hardly perceptible bitterness.*)
Why trouble her for an old woman's sake?
I will speak softly. But I'm urged, my child,
To tell you of a thing that slipped my mind
When with your evil news you frightened me —

Apelles (*with lowered voice*).
What's that?

Bolana. I have a little country-place
In Lebanon, near Heliopolis.
An excellent soil it has. We'll sell it off,
And it shall pay a portion of your debt.

Apelles (*touched, smiling*).
What, shall I rob you? Sooner die, dear mother.
No, speak no more of that.

Bolana. My child, you've taken
Already much from me — and willingly.
(*With an uncertain glance at* Phoebe.)

Nurture and love, I mean; for of my thoughts
Your obstinate and independent soul
Has taken naught since long. (*Submissive.*)
But — as you will (*sighing*),
For you know better.

Apelles (*smiling kindly*). Stop; I'll come to you.

[*Stands up cautiously and gently, laying* Phoebe's *head on a pillow; then goes to* Bolana.]

She sleeps on peacefully.— Come, mother mine,
Out of the bottom of my heart I long
To pleasure you in all I do and am.
But deep within me fiery moods prevail,
Hunger for beauty, riddles of the heart,
Which, like the wanderer's longing for his home,
Increase and drag us on.

Bolana (*a hand on her heart, yet controls herself*).
Child, so you say;
And so it is, no doubt.— I'll go again.
(*Aside.*)
Ah Zeus!

Apelles. A word still, mother. You look pale.

Bolana. Child, I am old.

Apelles. Unhappy too.

Bolana (*shakes her head*). Not greatly.
And if I told you why I am so, child,
You'd only scold.

Apelles (*smiling*). Not greatly.— What disturbs you?

Bolana (*taking courage*).
She who lies there.— I thought that Chryse's daughter
Would rule as mistress here, that was my wish.
'Twas that which brightened like a star of hope
The evening of my life.— But the strong moods
Drag you away.— I go.
(*Goes to her door.*)

Apelles (*shocked*). You're jesting, sure.

Bolana. Not that I know. Except — Oh Zeus!
[*She sinks as in a faint;* Apelles *catches her.*]
Apelles. What is it?
Oh mother, mother!
[*She revives a little, and points weakly to the door.*]
Come, I'll lead you in.—
The door swings back. Who's there?

Scene VI

Pausanias *enters, left, in Greek costume, pale.*

Pausanias. The doctor.
Apelles. Help, then.
Give her an arm — (*With sudden terror.*) No, come no nearer! I
Remember you. You spectre of destruction,
Muffled within this garment, which deceived me —
I have not seen you since that fatal hour.
What would you here today?
[Pausanias *looks in silence toward* Bolana. Apelles, *horrified.*]
My mother?
Pausanias. Hush!
You'll wake the sleeper there.— Your arm is trembling,
You'll let the old dame fall.
Apelles (*collects himself and presses* Bolana, *whose eyes are still shut, closer to his breast*).
No, I defy you.
I'll wrest her from you yet, you foe to mortals.
Don't touch her!
Pausanias. There's no need. Within are gnawing
The "black mice" that you wot of.
Apelles (*shaken*). Then I curse you,
That joy so in destruction.— I will chase

Them off, and you as well. For mighty too
Is a man's will.— She is awakening. Mother!
(*Caressing her.*)
Come, come! I'll lead you.

BOLANA (*with a faint voice*). Child! My own Apelles!

APELLES. Yes, your Apelles.
(*To* PAUSANIAS, *with low but firm voice.*)
Back there from the door!
I'm doctor here — not you.
(*To* BOLANA.)
Come on! I'll lead you.

[*Exit left with* BOLANA. PAUSANIAS *stands looking at the door.* PHOEBE, *who has already stirred, awakens.*]

SCENE VII

PHOEBE (*looking about*).
Where am I? — Here.— Apelles gone.— Who stands there?

[A SLAVE, *who has come from the second chamber, right, approaches* PHOEBE *with a sealed scroll in his hand.*]

PHOEBE. What bring you, Lydus?

SLAVE. 'Tis a scroll, my lady,
Brought by a slave. For you.

PHOEBE (*takes the scroll, speaking low*). Who is yon man,
So pale?

SLAVE (*glances hurriedly toward him*).
The doctor.— He departs.

PHOEBE. Go you.

[*Exit* SLAVE. PHOEBE *opens the scroll.*]

Who sends me this letter? (*Surprised.*) *Septimius!* (*Reads.*)

"Septimius to his mistress Phoebe: greeting and submission! — The gods so ordain it that this very night I undertake the journey to our beloved Rome. Our ancient friendship Apelles has severed; honor commands me no less than sympathy to offer you yet again assistance to save you from a sea of undeserved sorrow. He who writes this desires nothing, neither thanks nor aught else, save the uncertain glimmer of a distant hope. Five steps from here is my house; there I await you or your message.''

SCENE VIII

LONGINUS *enters right, in excitement which he seeks to master. It grows dark.*

LONGINUS. Where is Apelles?
[PHOEBE *does not notice him, but stares before her.*]
Only you.—Forgive me:
Why are you deep in thought?
PHOEBE (*looks at him*). And why are you
So gloomy and so moved?
LONGINUS. On your account.
Where is Apelles?
PHOEBE (*stands up*). Speak. On my account?
What has occurred?
LONGINUS. 'Tis but what might occur.
Let me inform Apelles—
PHOEBE (*goes to him*). No. Tell *me*
That which concerns me so!
LONGINUS. Aurelius threatens—
That noble man, all wrath and hate—
PHOEBE. He threatens?
LONGINUS As guardian of this city and its morals
He goes to bid the City Fathers make
A notable example.
PHOEBE (*trembles*). Speak!

LONGINUS. They shall
From out Palmyra banish you, he threatens;
The man of virtue is sincerely shocked!—
But fear not. Trust Apelles; and yet he—
What is it? Whither will you go?

PHOEBE. What! I?
What was I doing?

LONGINUS. That it is I ask.
You wandered—as your eyes do still. Afraid?

PHOEBE (*seeking words*).
For him—yes for Apelles. (*Aside.*) Help! ye gods.
Is this an omen? Must I go? Then say so
And end my misery!

LONGINUS. What have you there
All crumpled in your hand?

PHOEBE (*looks at the scroll; aside*). Septimius' letter.—
That is the omen, for he asked me there.
The gods have willed—I must depart.—Apelles!
I to desert you? But the gods have willed;
Even though my heart refuse.—Would you but come—
Yet no; don't come, don't come! I must depart;
Be it without farewell, farewell were death!

LONGINUS (*aside*).
What works in her, that she nor hears nor sees?
She sighs.

PHOEBE (*aside*). Farewell, farewell!—My heart is heavy—
And yet in craven anguish it would flee.
Farewell; forgive me!

[*Goes toward the back, tottering unsteadily.* PAUSANIAS *steps forward again from where he disappeared, stands between the pillars.*]

LONGINUS. Going? Where?

PHOEBE (*with broken voice*). I know not.—
Say to Apelles—

[*Her consciousness departs, she is about to* *fall.* PAUSANIAS *catches her; the letter falls from her hand, a shudder goes through her. Anxiously she opens her eyes.*]

Who are you? (*More quietly.*) The doctor.—
I thank you. (*Tries to smile.*) I am living.
Let me go.
(*Frees herself from his arms. To* LONGINUS.)
Say to Apelles — No.— I'll come again.
(*Aside.*)
Good-night, Apelles!
[*Totters out from the right, back.* PAUSANIAS *takes up the letter.*]

PAUSANIAS (*aside*). You'll not come again.
LONGINUS. How is't with Phoebe? Whither will she go?

SCENE X

Enter APELLES *left.*

APELLES (*looking back, more cheerfully*).
She sleeps now, peacefully.
[*Advances, sees* PAUSANIAS. *Starting back.*]
You here still? Waiting?
Where tarries Phoebe?
PAUSANIAS (*pointing away*). Gone.— But for this price
You may retain your mother there within.
[*Holds out the letter to him.* APELLES *takes it, glances at it; the letter trembles in his hand.*]
APELLES (*cries out*).
Gone with Septimius!
PAUSANIAS (*nods*). Gone.
LONGINUS. Speak, what has happened?
APELLES. Monster, do you rejoice? — She's left me, basely
Deserted! Faithless! —
(*With quivering voice.*)
'Tis my life that's gone,
My fortune, ecstacy.— My light, my muse —

Her weeping was a song, her laugh a rapture;
Her soul so gentle, and her heart so formed
For every virtue — save for strength and truth.
Then let her go! (*With a gesture.*)
Away from out this breast —
With her my throbbing heart, and blood and life!
[*Throws himself on a couch; buries his face. — After a pause* LONGINUS *goes to him and silently lays a hand on his shoulder.* APELLES *slowly lifts his head; gazes on* PAUSANIAS, *who is standing motionless.*]

APELLES. And does your stony eye demand, pale spirit,
Whether this wounded bosom still desires
To breathe forever and behold the day? —
Yes; I defy your question. Do not think
I hesitate or tremble. In your teeth
I summon life again; I seize it fast,
And like Antaeus thrown on Mother Earth
I raise myself the stronger from her breast.
Yes, I will strive, will work, with sweat on brow
And victory in heart, a man's true worth
And life's true worth forever to declare!

LONGINUS (*listening in wonder*).
Well said; but whom conjure you? Why appeal
So solemnly to the doctor here —

APELLES (*controls himself, smiling*). My spirit
Has erred, it seems. Horror and grief. . . . I wake now.
(*To* PAUSANIAS.)
What did you say? For this price I retain
My mother there within. Good, be it so.
Be that my comfort! — Come, philosopher,
Let's to my mother.

PAUSANIAS (*as the two depart, with muffled voice*).
We shall meet again.

ACT III

[As the dramatic movement of this act is very slow in starting, a large cut, including the first four scenes, has here been made. We learn from a letter that Phoebe died young, repentant of her sins, in the consolation of the Christian religion. Apelles has devoted himself to his art and to his mother, though he did not fulfil her wish that he should marry the daughter of Chryse. Some years after Bolana's peaceful death, Apelles became strangely drawn to a maiden named Persida, in whom he seemed to find the glorified spirit of Phoebe. Finally he married her, and at the time of Act III their daughter Tryphena is old enough to love and be loved by Jamblicus, the noble-spirited son of Longinus.

But Persida and her daughter have become Christians, and Persida's brother Herennianus, a bigoted elder of the new sect, discovers Tryphena's attachment to the "heathen" Jamblicus and resolves to break it at all costs. Apelles, despite the request of his zealous wife, remains faithful to the older religion, but his "goddesses, Art and Wisdom," have permitted him to build a temple to the God of the Christians. He is therefore tolerated by the community. But Herennianus urges upon Persida that another heathen marriage will certainly be resented by the mob, which is under the influence of Jarchai, formerly a persecutor but now a fanatical leader of the Christians. When Persida asks, "What of Apelles?" her brother reminds her of a vow made on a sick-bed to leave her husband and enter a religious life. He assures her that this is the only way to atone for her sin of living with a heathen and assures her that "The hand of God shall wipe away the tears from out the eyes" of those who give up all for Him. Thus adjured, Persida leaves her home for the house of her brother, who has already entrapped the unwilling Tryphena.

In the course of these scenes we learn that Septimius has died. Apelles is reconciled to Aurelius, now broken with age, who gives him the letter of Phoebe already mentioned. Persida, played by the same actress who appeared as Phoebe and Zoe, resembles the latter, but is more matronly and dignified. Timolaus appears in his regular rôle of ironic commentator. Apelles is represented as gray-haired but otherwise in full vigor. In the following scene we infer that Longinus has just been asking Apelles to let his daughter marry Jamblicus, the lover of her choice. Apelles has not learned that his wife and daughter have been taken from him.— TRANSLATOR.]

SCENE V

The open square before APELLES' *house as in the latter part of* Act I; *but altered: at the back, where previously was the rising ground with the palms, now stands a temple in the Grecian style; to the right, in place of the olive hedge, is a Christian basilica of the oldest type, seen in profile.*

Enter APELLES, LONGINUS *and* JAMBLICUS, *from* APELLES' *house.*

APELLES (*in conversation*).
What, you to doubt so of me — you, my friend?
LONGINUS. Only because I thought —
APELLES (*to* JAMBLICUS). Did Persida
Go out the door there?
JAMBLICUS. Yes, 'twas she.
APELLES (*to* LONGINUS *again*). You thought
Your friend Apelles had become a woman,
One who obeyed a master in his house!
A calculating coward —
LONGINUS (*smiling*). Nay, but listen —
APELLES. I'll hear no more. This is my word, my last:
Tryphena shall be his, if she desires it;
She could not find a better; him I wish.
And if the Christians came —
JAMBLICUS. As, take my word,
They surely will, to hinder you —

APELLES. What! me?
Is she not mine then?
LONGINUS. Listen. We are clear
Of self-deceit because we cherish wisdom;
Let us be wise, that we may keep our freedom.
He who makes too much noise will rouse the echo;
Quiet and busy is the better plan.
Are you resolved to give my son your child?
APELLES. By Zeus!
LONGINUS. Work softly then. We'll send them to
A guest-friend at Emesa; they shall wed there,
And he with money that he holds for us
Shall care for them. Here meanwhile will be storm,
Then wind, then quietude; for what is done
Must be endured; the honor of your name
Stands high here in Palmyra. And at last
The two return together — two? — perhaps
A third along with them.
APELLES (*with a half-smile*). How wise. For me
Too wise, man. How my heart swells, when I think
That basely I'm constrained to hide myself.
To save my child's right and her father's right —
That, too, within the city of my fathers,
Where once the Christian used to hide! — But time,
But time goes by, goes by.— And so the heart
Must wisely bow, nor make itself too great.
LONGINUS. So 'twould be better.
APELLES. Better.— Yes.
[*Confused tumult behind the scenes, right.*]
What's that
There in the Street of Pillars? Tumult —

LONGINUS. 'Tis
As if I heard the shrill voice of old Jarchai,
The wild fanatic.
JAMBLICUS (*goes toward the rear*).
Some one's fleeing hither—
Tryphena!

SCENE VI

Enter TRYPHENA.

TRYPHENA (*rushing in*).
Father, father, rescue me!
[*Sinks at his feet.*]
They follow—hark! They follow me to seize me.
You, you must not forsake me! To your knees
I cling and pray: oh father, save your child!
APELLES. Were I your father if I did not shield you?
Rise. Tell me what has happened.
TRYPHENA. They have sought
To force from me a vow—I must forever
Abjure the bridegroom of my heart, or else
In a far country, far from you must perish.
But rather will I die here at your feet
Than yield to him. O save me! When they threatened,
The voice of desperation cried out: Flee!
And forth I fled, through all the mob that stood
Outside I fled away and hasted hither,
And now I'm here with you.
APELLES. And in good care.
Stand up. (*Raises her.*) Who dares so foully to constrain
The daughter of Apelles?
[*The tumult has come nearer.*]
PERSIDA (*behind the scenes*). Spare her, spare her!
She is my child.
JARCHAI (*behind the scenes*). The Lord's child is she now,
And would defy him.

Enter JARCHAI *and an excited throng, also* PERSIDA *and* HERENNIANUS.

(NOTE.— JARCHAL, *formerly the* FIRST CITIZEN *of Act I, is now white-haired and supported by a stick, but is not enfeebled.*)

JARCHAI. Look you, there she stands.
'Tis true! And there's the heathen she would wed,
Standing beside her. She defies the Lord.
Tear her away!

APELLES. What's that you scream, old man?
'Tis I stand here, her father.

JARCHAI. Heathen too!
You have no word in this affair, for she's
A Christian. Let her go. Herennianus,
Why are you still? Speak out!

HERENNIANUS. You hear, Apelles.
The word of God has spoken by his mouth.
Tryphena would defy the sacred law.
Give her to me, the shepherd; and submit.

APELLES (*interrupting*).
I? Has the child no father then, or mother?—
There stands her mother Persida. Let her
Speak the right word for you; a Christian she.

HERENNI. Well, Persida, speak out!

PERSIDA (*struggling within herself, aside*). Oh God!

HERENNIANUS (*more softly*). You must.
The Lord expects you to obey *His* will,
Not that of men. Speak out!

JARCHAI (*comes nearer*). Proceed, proceed!

PERSIDA (*with trembling voice, which gradually grows steadier*).
Come here, Tryphena. Yield unto the Lord
And them who are His servants. And perform
That which His wrath commands you.

APELLES (*after a blank pause, with difficulty*). Persida!—
I did not hear aright.

HERENNIANUS. You did. She spoke
Just as she should.

JARCHAI. In her the Lord has spoken.
Do you come here, Tryphena!
[*The crowd grows gradually from right and left.* APELLES' *slaves have been coming one by one from the house.*]

APELLES. Persida!
Do you then list to me. This child, who trembles
Here in my arms — whom you forsake and give
An offering to your God of Wrath — this life
And blood of mine I'll hold
(*With a grim look toward* JARCHAI.)
despite yon jackal
And all the Jarchais of this crazy earth.
You I renounce, if you do me renounce;
You must from out my bosom, if the Jarchais
Command within your breast. Come here to me
Away from him, or else let love and faith,
Duty and happiness leave me with this breath.

HERENNI. What would you? Why so sorely do you threaten,
And solemnly — you see how she is trembling?
She follows but God's will —

APELLES. Are you her mouth?
I spoke to Persida.— Give answer! Are you
Apelles' wife, Tryphena's mother, or
The slave of Jarchai's slaves? (*Pause.*) Tell me!
[PERSIDA, *her hand on her heart, tries to speak, moves as if to go to* APELLES; HERENNIANUS *takes a step forward and checks her with a glance.*]

JARCHAI. She's dumb!
The Lord has sealed her lips.— Give here Tryphena
To us!

APELLES. You jackal!

JARCHAI. Listen how the heathen

Refuses us the Lord's child. Down with him!
Tear her from out his arms there!

CROWD (*in wild confusion*). Give her up!
Give up Tryphena!

PERSIDA (*weakly*). Hold your hands!

[*She sinks;* HERENNIANUS *holds her up in his arms. The crowd presses toward* APELLES; JAMBLICUS *steps forward to shield him and* TRYPHENA.]

APELLES (*motioning* JAMBLICUS *back*). Give me
But a clear path.— Come on! I yet have might
To hurl the hate your barking rouses in me,
And let it crash like lightning to your heart.
Ye dogs without a master, that the simoon
From o'er the sand makes mad — for all that's holy
In you turns frenzy hot as desert winds —
Come on, shatter on me your hollow skulls,
So shall the craziness which drives you on
Float off as vapor!

[*The crowd remains huddled some distance off, gives back a little.*]

JARCHAI (*to the crowd*). What! you'll leave to him
A Christian maid?— Tryphena, here to me!
Here to your people!

[TRYPHENA *shrinks trembling into* APELLES' *arms.*]

See, she will not come,
Defying the Lord's people.— Seize her, seize her!

HERENNI. Hold back there!

PERSIDA (*sinking from his arms*).
I am dying.

A CITIZEN (*from the midst of the crowd*).
Stone them! Stone them!

APELLES. Who cries out "stone them?" That man I will kill
With this bare hand.

[*Rushes madly at the crowd. All flee toward the rear; only* PAUSANIAS *remains. Dressed like the others, he has joined the crowd unseen.— He gazes steadily and quietly at* APELLES. APELLES, *recognizing him, in his first surprise goes a step back.*]

APELLES. You spectre of the Pit,
Are you too here? Crow, do you scent the victim?
I am immortal, I am strong as you —
I am the Lord of Death. Then, fiend of hell,
Down on your knees.
[*Seizes him violently and brings him down on one knee.*]
I fear you? No, I fear
Nor Death, nor Life; — not even Life I fear.
Though Life a hundred times with rage and hate
Should come, with howling madness and with grief,
I would defy it, hold it, cling unto it,
(*Enfolding in his arms* TRYPHENA, *who flees to him again.*)
As I embrace this child.— And you, sworn foe,
I'd shake from me like dust.
(*To the terrified crowd.*)
Give place, or you
I'll hurl to death, but me you cannot slay.
Palmyra shall be yours; faith, hate and all.
Give me but room to go.

JARCHAI (*timidly, as though stunned*). He's talking wildly.

PERSIDA (*on the ground, sustained by several citizens*).
They're going.— Saviour!

HERENNIANUS (*near her, softly*). Expiate your sin.
So saith the Lord: Be faithful unto death,
And I will give to thee a crown of life.

APELLES (*to* LONGINUS *and* JAMBLICUS).
Come friends, let's go. There's no one who can stay.

Within the land of Persia's king dwell *men.*
There's room enough on earth yet. Come,
  Tryphena (*after a glance at* PERSIDA),
Now doubly mine, all mine!

[*The timidly retreating crowd has made a wide lane for them.* APELLES, TRYPHENA, LONGINUS *and* JAMBLICUS *exeunt, left.*]

PERSIDA (*as they go, aside*). The hand of God
Shall wipe away the tears from out their
  eyes. . . . (*Suddenly aloud.*)
Apelles!—Help me!

[*Closes her eyes.*]

ACT IV

[In the opening scene Longinus and Apelles are discovered alone in the mountains near Palmyra; Longinus very old and feeble, Apelles vigorous as ever. We learn that all the other persons of the play, including Jamblicus and Tryphena, have died; but that Nymphas, the stripling son of these two is now dwelling with his two grandfathers. At the close Longinus says "We die and come not back," to which Apelles answers that the Indian sages believe we have been and shall be again. "Slowly ripens the soul of man, not in one life. To become godlike it must pass through many and various forms."—TRANSLATOR.]

SCENE II

(*As in Scene I*)

Lonely mountain region near Palmyra. In the background, naked rock to which leads a path; in the foreground on both sides, vegetation—wild fig-trees, a shady chestnut, boulders with blossoming shrubbery. Left, near the chestnut tree the remains of an old building, the part which is standing arranged as a hut, the door of which opens upon the stage. Under the chestnut tree a bench of stone and rough seats.

(APELLES *continues his argument with* LONGINUS.) NYMPHAS *appears on the rocky path; a charming youth, played by the impersonator of* PERSIDA, *like her as well as like* PHOEBE. *He descends slowly.*

APELLES (*does not notice that* LONGINUS *is nodding, nor does he see* NYMPHAS. *Speaks on, looking in front of him*).

Why might it not be?—Sometimes I lie down and say to myself: Who was that Zoe with the mysterious look? And Phoebe, and Persida—did Zoe's spirit go on in them? And you Nymphas, my darling boy—have I ever known you before?—Sometimes it comes to me that I have known you before.

NYMPHAS (*stands for a while behind* APELLES, *then lays a hand on his shoulder. Smiling exuberantly*).

I was a sacred mongoose on the Nile, or again a priestess of Vesta whom they buried alive; the historians haven't worked it all out yet.

APELLES (*as if shaking off his thoughts, with an affectionate glance*).

It's you!—Look, Longinus is asleep.

NYMPHAS (*smiling*).

But he will deny it.

(*Softly at* LONGINUS' *ear.*)

Grandfather Longinus! Are you asleep?

LONGINUS (*awakes*).

I? How should I sleep? I never sleep in daytime. (*Aside.*)

How much he is like Persida today. (*Aloud.*)

You were in Palmyra, Apelles told me.

NYMPHAS. Yes, this afternoon, while you—were waking. I was clever—more than usually so—I found it out with circumspection. They already know in Palmyra that we live here behind the mountains; an old beggar who one night recently slept under this tree, had in the morning seen the "Master of Palmyra." But they don't trouble themselves about us, they will not seek us out; those who formerly were angry at you are old or dead. Besides, the Palmyrans have now other things in their hearts.

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MARY MAGDALEN

LONGINUS. H'm! — What are they doing?

NYMPHAS. Quarreling and disputing —

LONGINUS. I believe it; they are human. What are they quarreling about?

NYMPHAS (*with spirit*).

About the man who is now turning the world upside down, about the great Emperor Julian. Some curse him — I heard it in the open market place — because he has fallen off from the faith of his uncle, the Christian Constantine, they call him the Renegade, the Apostate; the others proclaim to the people how wise and good he is, and prophesy a rebirth of the old times. If he overcomes the Persians whom he is now fighting, he will come as conqueror to Palmyra and here too cast down the spite of the Christians before him. And the fallen grandeur of the old Roman Empire will arise again.

LONGINUS (*sadly smiling*).

You think so? — It lies dead, will never rise again. When an elephant is sunk in a swamp, only elephants can help him. Such a giant will not come. Those times are past.

[*A shepherd blows his pipe.*]

APELLES. Let us leave time alone. To live timeless, as we do, is happiness for man.—'Tis well with me in the evening stillness. Of strife and misfortune we've had enough; long, restless wandering through the countries of men. Here sorrow does not croak at us, and our desires sleep. Wild Palmyra, the city of our fathers, so near and so far; the silent ocean of the desert beneath our feet; (*looks up*) and above us the ever steadfast citadel of peace, the dome wrought by the world's Master-Builder, of unfathomable blue — till those silver mysteries, the flames of night, break through it. O solitude sublime! only thou canst enkindle in us sublime thoughts, the inextinguishable fire of the soul upon the summits of life.

LONGINUS (*nods*).

On the poison-tree of life grow two good fruits: wisdom and friendship.

[*Takes* APELLES' *hand and presses it.*]

NYMPHAS (*has been looking away*).

No others, you think.

LONGINUS (*weary again*).

Poisonous ones enough.

NYMPHAS. I know. Young as I am, I've had much experience. But the gods, methinks, gave us the world that we should make it better.

LONGINUS. H'm! [*Doses off.*]

NYMPHAS (*smiling*).

He sleeps.

APELLES (*likewise smiling*). Your youthful wisdom must have sung
Him e'en asleep.— Yet, child, I feel in you,
From glance and word, from every token of
Your wingèd life: the world's awake in you,
You're drawn to it.— My young philosopher,
My early ripened scholar, do you feel
Too lonely, live too old here with the old?—
Yet for a time, my child, be patient here.
Then will we break our camp, and wander off,
Since it must be so, back into the world,
Which you would fain make better.
(*Laying both hands on his shoulders.*)
But believe me,
It soon will disappoint you. You, so honest
And good and noble, and so clever too,
Will see into its heart. In there, a wheel
With brightly-colored spokes is turning round;
For all things change and then come back again,
And all the souls of men are bits of glass
Of various hues, through which the single Spirit

Of Life — or call Him as you will — doth shine.
He stands invisible behind each soul,
As its true self, and lives in us His life.
NYMPHAS. But we who do not see Him, we should seek
Him out amid these others of our kind
And love Him in the best of them.
APELLES. Ay, love!
You're young, and delicate, and tender-hearted;
You will love women also. Ah, good Nymphas,
Believe me, women are no goddesses;
And none, I fear, will make you wholly happy.
For they that love, can never fascinate;
And they that fascinate, love more the magic
By which they charm, than you.— But let's not speak
Of that which was and is no more.— You now
Are wife and child and all.
NYMPHAS. And you to me
The dearest upon earth.
APELLES. Am I, in sooth?
Then tell me what is wrong, confess it freely.
For days, for weeks you've shown a strange unrest.
You hasten to Palmyra, finding still
Excuse to go there, and when you come back,
You're deeply moved, you dream.—A girl?
NYMPHAS. No, no.
APELLES. You're sure?
NYMPHAS. Do I ever lie?
APELLES. What then? — I found
You yesterday behind a rock, you brandished
The ancient sword which had so long lain buried
In this inclosure, and you fought, cheeks glowing,
As with an unseen enemy. Pray what
Made you so warlike? If it was this brawl
Below there —

SCENE III

PAUSANIAS *comes down the rock path, in Greek costume, with full beard, a gilded lyre hung over his shoulder. (It has grown dark, after a time it becomes bright moonlight.)*

APELLES (*casually glancing out*).
Who is that? the shepherd boy?
NYMPHAS. A stranger.
APELLES (*surprised*).
What should bring him here to this
Retired corner?—Ask him what he wants.
[NYMPHAS *goes a few steps toward* PAUSANIAS. LONGINUS *awakes, looks around in wonder.*]
APELLES. 'Tis night, Longinus. But the moon will come;
'Twas full moon yesterday.
LONGINUS (*considering*). True, yesterday.
NYMPHAS (*to* PAUSANIAS).
Greetings to you. What brings you here?
PAUSANIAS. My wanderings.
I come from the Euphrates?
NYMPHAS. From the Euphrates?
Why come you then to us?
LONGINUS (*pointing backward*). There lies the west—
Damascus, not the Euphrates.
PAUSANIAS. I have strayed,
I'm for Palmyra—but am very weary.
Pray, if the stranger here is not unwelcome
Grant me a little rest.
LONGINUS. The tired wanderer
Is never sent away. Sit down.
NYMPHAS. And drink.
PAUSANIAS (*declining*).
Thank you, I've drunk already.
NYMPHAS. Where?
PAUSANIAS. I struck
Upon a caravan of more than fifty
Camels, which journey to the north, toward Sura.

They listened to the music of my lyre,
Praised and refreshed me, then I went my ways.
[*Lays aside the lyre. They sit beneath the chestnut tree; only* APELLES *stands aside, sunk in thought, afterward surveying the moon, which — invisible from the front, right — begins to shine.*]

LONGINUS (*wondering*).
You are a traveling singer?
PAUSANIAS. Yes.
LONGINUS. And wander
Across this desert?
PAUSANIAS. To the sea — my home.
NYMPHAS. You are a Greek?
PAUSANIAS. I am. My name — Pausanias.
NYMPHAS. Pausanias! A good name for a singer:
The Care-Releaser.
PAUSANIAS (*gazing fixedly at the countenance of* NYMPHAS).
Yes, men call me too
The Care-Releaser.
NYMPHAS. Pray, if you are not
Too sorely tired, tell me one thing more.
You're from the Euphrates; did you learn there aught
About the Emperor Julian and his army?
PAUSANIAS. I saw the Emperor.
NYMPHAS (*rises in surprise*). You?
PAUSANIAS (*smiles*). Why should I not? —
I crossed his line of march. The gods had then
Smitten him sorely: the great general,
Victor in west and east, such that the flatterers
Were likening him to Hercules and Bacchus,
Who conquered west and east — he on the Tigris
Within his foes' chief city Ktesiphon,
Had to return. A treacherous deserter
Induced him as he went to cross the waste,

Where sand and heat and thirst and Persian arrows
Consumed his army, till the victory-march
Became a wild retreat. But in this need
He showed himself a hero. Full of patience,
Wise, disciplined and brave. I felt his power
On seeing him. He sat before his tent,
Generals and soldiers near; his face was pale
With a great sickness that had come upon him,
Yellow and lean he looked, his temples gray;
But in his eye dark fire, his glance was lofty,
As if the Persians lay beneath his feet.
He sat as on his throne there, and his voice,
Though weak, yet rang as with a trumpet's tone
Through the clear desert air. "And when we get
To Syria," he said, so that I heard it,
"Then will we turn the wheel. The goddess Fortune,
The goddess of old Rome once more shall rise,
And the gods' enemies shall bite the dust!"

Nymphas (*who has sat listening to the account with lively changing gestures, springs up involuntarily*).
Lay on! lay on!

Longinus (*starts*). How now?

Apelles (*has been looking away, glances around with interest*). What is it, Nymphas?

Nymphas (*composes himself, tries to smile*).
Forgive.—'Twas but an impulse in my body
Went to my tongue.—You see me now again
Your philosophic pupil. (*To* Pausanias.) Tell me how
You left the Emperor.

Pausanias. On yester evening—
That was the latest—when his eye beheld me,
He had me called to play and sing for him.
I did—it pleased him.

NYMPHAS. What, the Emperor!
To think this lyre has sounded before him!
PAUSANIAS. Yes, e'en before great Julian.
NYMPHAS. And may I
Look at the lyre?
[*Takes it and runs over the strings.*]
I pray you play for me
That very tune.
PAUSANIAS. Surely. It was a song
Of your Adonis, in the Grecian style:
How from the upper to the under world
Adonis changes, by the gods' decree.
NYMPHAS. I sing that too.
PAUSANIAS. Then sing, and I will play.
NYMPHAS (*after a short prelude by* PAUSANIAS, *sings*).
So decrees all-powerful Zeus: thou must now,
Deep beneath the blossoming earth descending,
Kiss the lips of shadowy Persephoneia,
Lovely Adonis.
APELLES (*listens a while indifferently, delighting in the voice of* NYMPHAS; *then becomes astonished, excited. Aside*).
What sort of harp-playing is that? So plays
But one that ever I heard.
NYMPHAS (*begins the second stanza*).
When once more in springtime the brooks are babbling—
APELLES (*has sprung up, steps in front of* NYMPHAS).
Stop! You are—
I know you now!
[LONGINUS *and* NYMPHAS *look up in wonder;* PAUSANIAS *does not move.*]
PAUSANIAS. Who am I?
APELLES. Stop, you monster!
Let not your name be named, by you or me!
And for this lyre—accursèd be its tone!—
Take it and go!

PAUSANIAS. You err—

APELLES. Away!

PAUSANIAS (*stands up*). I go then.
You err though; you have never seen me. Why
Blame you the lyre? It is not different
From others; look at it. And if its sound
Was pleasing to yon youth— [NYMPHAS *nods.*]

APELLES (*looks at it, with horror*). Away with you!
(*As* NYMPHAS *looks at him surprised and questioningly, he tries to compose himself. More quietly.*)
Leave him and us; go forward to Palmyra—
And come not back!

PAUSANIAS. So be it; to Palmyra.—
You have mistaken me—
(*After a gesture of* APELLES.)
Nay, I'll be silent.
The moon shines bright. Farewell.
[*Exit right, front.* APELLES *looks after him till he has disappeared.* NYMPHAS *regards* APELLES *in silence; at last timidly lays a hand on his arm.*]

NYMPHAS. What is it, father
Apelles?

APELLES. Hush. (*Aside.*) At last he's gone.

LONGINUS. You said
You recognized this man!

APELLES. I saw him once.
Perhaps I'm wrong though. Leave it as it is.
I would his way may lead him to Palmyra.
'Tis late, Longinus, and your hour is come.
I'll lead you to the house.

LONGINUS (*leans on* APELLES, *to depart*).
He played right well,
I thought—

APELLES (*starts*). No more! Let's go.

LONGINUS (*smiles good-naturedly*). Eh, so imperious.—
You'll follow, Nymphas?

NYMPHAS (*awaking from his thoughts*).
Soon.— The night is fair,
My soul yet sleepless.
APELLES (*overcome by his attitude*). Nymphas!
NYMPHAS. Did you call?
APELLES (*composes himself; quietly*).
No. It can wait.
LONGINUS (*at the hut*). Sleep well.
NYMPHAS. Sleep well.
[LONGINUS *and* APELLES *exeunt into the hut.*]

SCENE IV

SABBAEUS, *young and beardless, girt with a sword, comes warily reconnoitering, from right. He steps behind a boulder which conceals him from the hut.*

NYMPHAS. He grieved
The stranger.— Should one grieve one's fellow-mortals?
Is not their right compassion?
[SABBAEUS *advances warily.*]
Who goes there?
Sabbaeus!
SABBAEUS (*softly and quickly*).
It is I, come here to fetch you.
Tonight it must be done.
NYMPHAS (*in sudden exultant joy*). Tonight! — O Zeus!
SABBAEUS. The friends assemble in the shrine of Fortune,
In secret, armed. A fire will then be lighted
Beside the Street of Tombs. When by its glare
The city shall be frighted and confused,
We'll break from hiding and perform our part,
Just as agreed.
NYMPHAS. 'Tis well.
SABBAEUS. So arm yourself
And come.
NYMPHAS (*pointing behind a boulder*).
There lies my sword.
[*Goes thither.*]

SABBAEUS (*with a gesture toward the hut*).
And he — Apelles?
NYMPHAS (*halting*).
Impossible. He never would consent.
SABBAEUS. 'Tis pity. In the "Master of Palmyra"
We'd have a leader all should reverence.
(*Decisively, smiling.*) Ah, well, if not with reverence, then with fear.
NYMPHAS (*terrified*).
The door swings back.
SABBAEUS. Then I must go.— You'll follow.
[*Flees hurriedly away, right.*]

SCENE V

Enter APELLES *from the hut. He gazes after the fleeing man with anxious unrest.*

APELLES. Nymphas!
NYMPHAS (*with uncertain voice*).
My father!
APELLES. Who was here? Who yonder
Descends the pass? The — Greek was't?
NYMPHAS. No.
APELLES. The singer?
Tell me, by all the gods.
NYMPHAS. I told you: No.
Why should he be so dreadful?
APELLES (*with a breath of relief*). Hush.—'Twas *not* he.—
Who then? Who spoke with you, at this late hour
And in this solitude?
NYMPHAS (*hesitating*). Oh, let me, pray,
Be silent.
APELLES (*after a pause*). Nymphas! Nymphas!
NYMPHAS (*uneasily*). Are you angry,
Father Apelles?
APELLES. Has it come to this?
The first concealment between you and me?

This bond of soul, more deep than any else,
Is't but a half-bond like the rest?
Nymphas. Oh father!
[*Deeply moved, about to speak; refrains.*]
Apelles. Aye, for you still are silent. Let me then
Divine your secret. In Palmyra quarrel
The Whites and Reds — or howsoe'er they call
The colors of the factions that contend.
And you, you quarrel too.
Nymphas (*after a short hesitation*). And need you speak
So scornfully about it, when we fight
For what is holy? When we fight to aid
The Emperor and help him to fulfill
All he would fain accomplish for the world?
Apelles. 'Tis so! It *is* so.— You!
Nymphas. And why not I?
Am not I too a scion of my people?—
You have divined it, so I'll not be silent;
Long this deceit has weighed upon my breast.
(*Pleading.*) Let me. I must go down now to Palmyra.
Apelles. Tonight?
Nymphas. Tonight.
Apelles. To slay the Emperor's foes?
Nymphas. We will slay none that do not seek to die.
Our enemies — and they are yours as well —
Are masters and they shall not be so more.
The Christian bishop governs in Palmyra;
The craven praetor serves him. Both we'll take
Tonight and banish them from out the land,
Proclaiming freedom and the ancient gods.
Apelles. Bishop and praetor — will they freely go?
Nymphas. The garrison have all gone off to Persia.
The crowd's divided, and the waverers
Will join the valiant victor.
Apelles. Why not wait
Till Julian comes, and let him bring for you
What you desire?

NYMPHAS. The Emperor is too mild
And cautious.
APELLES. Prudent.
NYMPHAS. And he waits, may be,
Until the people rise up of themselves:
Great is the Christians' power. But he'll approve
What we accomplish and will bless our work.
APELLES. He'll die, and then a Christian emperor
May rule again? Oh child, my child, would you
Turn back the wheel? Do you not hear the roar
O' the wind that drives it on?—If ye should win
Tonight for this one time, how will it end?
We too once freed the city of our fathers
And gave new rights to everyone, but then,
Since mortals will be mortals, all our work
Grew rotten, spoiled and useless like the old.
"To save the world!" My child, what is the world?
This man it stones today, tomorrow that.
Give up your dream and stay.
NYMPHAS. Forgive, I honor
Your word as 'twere the gods'; and yet I must
Go down, for I have sworn it. [*Starts to go.*]
APELLES. No! No! No!
I will not let you. (*Steps before him.*)
Nymphas, look on me!
Upon this earth I've no one else but you,
None else, and you would go to your destruction.
To your destruction! The Adonis song
Rings in mine ear still, and the harp of Death —
(*Breaking off.*)
Oh stay with me, my child. A dread foreboding
Thrills in this fear-numbed bosom. You have been

My best, my sweetest, dearest, purest joy;
The sun which never sank for me. Your mother
Bequeathed you to me — and your mother's mother
Whom grief soon freed from life — her image, you,
On whom yet shines the golden light of day,
Of sun-bright gladness, perfect symmetry,
In whom there is no blemish. Ah, my Nymphas,
Why do I praise you? With clear eyes you see
All that you are to me. And now your spirit,
Nobly exalted on the wings of youth,
Flies from me toward the terrible abyss.—
No, I'll not bear it! I will live with you
And die with you, but not weep over you.

Nymphas (*sinks on his breast*).
O my dear father, and my god on earth! —
But let me, let me go. I must depart.
'Tis honor that commands me, and the gods.

Apelles (*holds him fast*).
One only calls you: Death.

Nymphas. But I have sworn;
Shall I be perjured?
[*A fiery glow, gradually increasing, falls on the stage from right.*]
Oh ye gods, alas!
Already shines the signal through the night.
I must, I must. Farewell.
[*Tears himself free.*]

Apelles (*wildly*). Why then, ye call
Me too, ye gods — me too along with Nymphas.—
I will not leave you. Come, then. Noble folly,
The father must go too; my child will I
Protect, and with him conquer or go down.
Apelles of Palmyra wields yet once
Again his sword for idols or for gods;
The fire calls; away!

NYMPHAS. You'll come then, father?
APELLES. My sword, my trusty sword!
[*Flings open the door, enters.* NYMPHAS *hurries to the boulder behind which lies his sword, takes it.*]
LONGINUS (*unseen, from the hut*).
What's wrong?—Apelles!
APELLES (*comes out again with his sword*).
The glow increases, and our courage. Forward!
"Down with the enemies of the ancient gods!"
[*Rushes off with* NYMPHAS, *right.*]
LONGINUS (*in the hut*).
Apelles! Nymphas!

SCENE VI

LONGINUS (*entering*). What is wrong? Apelles
Gone without answering?—Not a sound?—Is that
A red glow in the sky, or is it only
In my old eyes?—Apelles! Man, where are you?
VOICE (*behind the scenes, loud, mysterious*).
Julian the Apostate is no more!
The Emperor is slain!
LONGINUS (*listens confused, terrified*).
Who calls?—The voice
Is like a spirit's.—So men say, that once
The voice of one unseen cried through the world:
"The great god Pan is dead." And all things listened.
VOICE (*farther off, from the height*).
Julian the Apostate is no more!
The Emperor is slain!
LONGINUS (*trembles*). 'Tis further off
And going toward Palmyra.—Yes, I heard it;

I did not dream.—Where are you?—Nymphas!
—Would you
Leave an old man alone?
[*Totters, supported on his staff, toward the right.*]
Apelles! Nymphas!
[*Exit right.*]

SCENE VII

(*The scene is changed without lowering the curtain*)

The square before APELLES' *house in Palmyra, as in Act III. Night, as before; moonlight and the glow of the fire. The door of the temple at the rear is open; the basilica seems to be burning.*

Enter APELLES, NYMPHAS, SABBAEUS *and a band of armed "young Palmyrans"; partly from the temple, partly from the pillared gate behind the basilica. Trumpets resound on all sides, even during the change of scene.*

APELLES (*angrily*).
Who was it threw the brand into yon church?
Who dared set fire to it?
SABBAEUS. We do not know,
Worthy Apelles.
APELLES. That infuriates
The Christians, who gave way, to righteous wrath;
Alarms our friends and multiplies our foes.
[*Fresh trumpet-calls.*]
Listen!—I knew it well: you undervalued
The praetor and his forces.
SABBAEUS. He escaped us.
VOICE (*behind the scene*).
Julian the Apostate is no more!
The Emperor is slain!
APELLES (*alarmed*). Who calls!
[*All stand amazed.*]
NYMPHAS. The Emperor dead?
SABBAEUS. Was that a human voice?

AGRIPPA (*behind the scene*). Hark, citizens!
The Emperor has fallen. Hark, the last
O' the heathen emperors dead! Then charge! for God
And all His host are with us.

SCENE VIII

AGRIPPA (*the son of* JARCHAI, *a citizen, in armor*) *and a troop of armed citizens enter through the gate, right. Fresh trumpet-calls, right and left.*

AGRIPPA. There they stand;
See, but a handful.—Ye incendiaries,
Church-robbers! I, Agrippa, son of Jarchai,
Demand of you in God's name to surrender.

APELLES. What, we surrender?—Nymphas, stand near me,—
Our goal is to be free, not to surrender.
[*Motioning with his sword for his band to attack.*]
Down with the enemies of the ancient gods!

VOICE (*as before*).
Julian the Apostate is no more!
The Emperor is dead!
[*The Palmyrans who are pressing forward with* APELLES *halt as the voice rings out; then shrink slowly back in timid hesitation.*]

AGRIPPA (*to his band*). You hear it! God
Foretells our victory by his messenger.
See, fear has turned the miscreants to stone.

NYMPHAS (*overcoming his dread*).
My brothers, why shrink back there? You who came
To fight with gods and mortals, if need were,
Does a mere voice affright you? Listen how
The martial trumpets shout encouragement,
Freedom and victory!

[*Advances; tears himself free from* APELLES, *who involuntarily tries to hold him back.*]
Let go! — On guard,
Agrippa, son of Jarchai. [*Wounds him.*]

AGRIPPA (*staggers, but recovers*). I'll repay that
Before I fall, though.

[*Wounds* NYMPHAS; *falls.* NYMPHAS *sinks on one knee, lays a hand on his breast.*]

APELLES (*shrieks*). Nymphas!

AGRIPPA (*on the ground*). Strike them down!
God is with us. [*Trumpets from left.*]
Those are our people — hear ye? —
Send them to seek their emperor!

[*The band of* AGRIPPA *attacks and drives off that of* APELLES — *with them* SABBAEUS — *toward the left; from without continuous tumult and clang of weapons. For some moments only* AGRIPPA, NYMPHAS *and* APELLES *are on the stage.* APELLES *kneels by* NYMPHAS, *supporting him.*]

APELLES. Child! you're bleeding —
But surely you'll not die.

NYMPHAS. Yes, I am dying.
Don't leave me.

APELLES (*in wild despair*). I'll prevent it. I have willed:
You shall not die! So young, so good.—Ye gods!
You must not, must not.

NYMPHAS. I will try to live.

[*Raises himself slowly. A party of the victors has come back from left, they press toward* APELLES.]

AGRIPPA (*on the ground*).
Victory to you! Strike him down!

APELLES (*kills one of his assailants, the others shrink back*).
Begone! —
Stand up, stand up, my child.

NYMPHAS (*sinks back on his knee*). I cannot, father.
Farewell.

APELLES. Then I'll die after you. I curse
This life that never ends!—Oh Death, where art thou?
Show me thy countenance! If thou slayest him,
Slay me along with him!—Come on, all ye;
[*Throws away his sword.*]
I offer to you this unarmored breast.
Come on, and strike!
[*Some brandish their swords at him, but without hitting him; then, with the others, they shrink timidly back from him.*]

AGRIPPA. Can you not hit him? Are
Ye then bewitched, unmanned?

APELLES. Stay here, and kill!
Ye butchers, swing the axe,
[*He goes toward them; they retire.*]
I am accurst,
And none has power to kill me.—Nymphas! Nymphas!
[*Goes to him again and sinks on one knee beside him.*]

NYMPHAS. 'Tis you!

APELLES. What would you?

NYMPHAS (*points backward*). Take me to the temple
To die before my goddess—

APELLES. Come! I'll bear you;
This one time more, my child.—And you, my temple,
Take here your latest victim! Be accurst,
That none more falls to you, when this is offered!

NYMPHAS (*in his arms*).
Good-night, my father!
[APELLES *bears him into the open temple, flings shut the door behind him. From left and right troops of the conquering citizens throng on the stage. Far and near trumpet-calls.*]

Agrippa (*to the citizens who would help him up*).

I must perish here.
Throw fire into the temple! Burn it down!

ACT V

Square in Palmyra, as in Act III; but now a place of ruins. Before Apelles' *house stand but a few walls, of the temple only a row of pillars and several cross-beams, the rest is debris, broken columns and mighty blocks in and before the temple piled one upon another; grass and flowers grow between the stones. The basilica stands open, without doors; it is also partly destroyed and burnt out.*

Scene I

Sabbaeus (*middle-aged, bearded*) Maeonius *and four young Palmyrans (other than those of Act IV) sit about, on blocks of stone and pieces of columns; some have garlands lying near them or hanging on their arms.*

Maeonius (*stands up*).

Would you repose yet longer? I am weary
With sitting still here. Let us go.

Sabbaeus. As restless
As any hungry jackal!—Wait awhile.

Maeonius (*smiling*).

Lazy as full-gorged snakes!

Sabbaeus. Well, let us then
Lie here like snakes; the serpent and the lizard
Thrive well here—wherefore not the sons of men?
We've come in time; for to the Vale of Tombs
'Tis but five hundred paces—

Maeonius. More.

Sabbaeus. No more.
This is a spot for dreaming. Gaily rustles
The grass, the crickets chirp; and all the old
Pillars and walls and fragments which the tooth
Of time has gnawed—it makes one think a bit.
And when at evening from the garden there

The boys are chanting — (*To one of the boys.*)
Sing a song, Seleucus.
Sing us the Grecian ditty of Adonis,
Whose feast it is today. We thus perform
The rites with honor, and Maeonius grants
A further rest.

MAEONIUS. So be it. Then I'll stretch
Me out again.— Come, sing!

SELEUCUS (*sings*).
So decrees all-powerful Zeus: thou must now,
Deep beneath the blossoming earth descending,
Kiss the lips of shadowy Persephoneia,
Lovely Adonis.

SCENE II

APELLES *appears in the background between the standing pillars; in neglected, fantastic clothing, his gray hair disheveled, a staff in his hand. He remains there listening, gloomy and dejected.*

SELEUCUS (*sings again*).
When once more in springtime the brooks are babbling,
Thou shalt greet the sunlight, oh youth lamented,
And shalt kiss the golden-haired Aphrodite,
Lovely Adonis!

SABBAEUS. A pretty song; my favorite. [*Notices* APELLES.]
(*In an undertone.*) Look! Who's standing
There by the pillars? No contented man
I well believe. If such a one by night
Should meet me in the Vale of Tombs, by Zeus,
I'd think: he's coming from the burial-crypt
From lying in his coffin!

MAEONIUS (*softly*). He comes hither.

APELLES. Greetings to you. You sang a song which I —
Which I have heard long years since.

SABBAEUS. Of Adonis.

MAEONIUS (*pointing to the singer*).
Seleucus sang it.

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MEDITATION

SABBAEUS. 'Tis the festal day
Of the young god Adonis in Palmyra.
APELLES (*thinks, nods*).
It is the day.—And hence the garlands there.
MAEONIUS (*confidentially*).
And for another cause, old man. (*Smiling.*)
If you'll
Not tell the strict church-fathers of Palmyra:
They would look glum enough. They even want
To interdict the old gods' festivals.—
We go to deck the tombstones of our sires
Who for the sake of freedom and the gods
Fell when the Emperor Julian died.
SABBAEUS. You are
A stranger, and will not have heard the tale.
APELLES. Nay, somewhat.
MAEONIUS. They all fell
(*pointing to* SABBAEUS), excepting him—
He got away; years later he came back,
When 'twas forgotten.
SABBAEUS (*smiling contentedly*). So I'm living still,
And think to do these many days.
APELLES (*to* MAEONIUS). You said
They *all* fell.
SABBAEUS. Yes. Although there was one more,
Him whom they called the Master of Palmyra;
I saw him only once,—'twas on that night.
He fought most furiously, and in yon temple
Was burned; but others said again: he lived.
He was seen afterward—as they affirmed—
Beside this temple, now no temple more.
First was the fire and then, a year ago,
An earthquake—twice it shattered the foundations—
No temple can stand that.—The Master though
Is said to wander restless; Jesus Christ
Has damned him to live on—or it may be

Some other Christian saint. Well, they should know.—
He too was there at least.

APELLES. You deck the graves
Of those who died, young men. And you?

MAEONIUS. And we?

APELLES. Do you still hope?

MAEONIUS. For what?

APELLES. For better times.

MAEONIUS (*looks at him awhile in wonder*).
And where, sir, should they be?

APELLES. Perhaps in you.

MAEONIUS. You must be joking. That's all done. We're down,
The Christians up.

SABBAEUS. And for the Roman Empire,
It fares just like the temple.— Crack!— 'Twill hold
Together for awhile, but then 'twill fall.
Barbarian tribes are roaming up and down
Through all the world, they overcome our armies
And sack the provinces. Well, what's to do?
We bear it, though. We drift so with the times,
That he may have us who'll but let us live.
Small has Palmyra grown; but even now
One may live well therein. The wise man says:
Bend and submit, and so enjoy the hour.

APELLES (*aside*).
He lives and Nymphas died!

MAEONIUS. Yes, pluck the day
As saith the epitaph: "I was naught, am naught;
Do thou who livest, eat, drink, jest and follow!"
And men upon my grave, as on that Roman's,
Shall place my marble image, in my hand
The cup from which I drank, and write beneath it:

"Drink, friend, and live; whatever else may be
Fire and earth will swallow."—You, old man,
Are not so wise. Your aspect is not merry.
Where has your way led?

APELLES. Amid many nations,
And many countries; yea, belike through all.
I've been where in the zenith burns the sun
And where it journeys on the rim of heaven;
Where night was long as is the winter here,
Where muddy craters belched and icebergs floated.
And yet I never was as wise as ye.
Jest on and drink!

SABBAEUS. He dotes, or else he mocks us.

MAEONIUS (*softly*).
All is not right within his head, may be.
Leave him, and come. 'Tis late. (*Aloud.*)
We're going.

SABBAEUS. Yes, to
The Vale of Tombs. Dream you about your bergs
Of ice that float, about your mud volcanoes,
Farewell.
[*They go, softly laughing with one another.*]

MAEONIUS. Farewell.—Be merry again, old man.
Despite the years you still are strongly built,
And marvelous straight in carriage. Mark the saw:
"Eat, drink and jest, and follow!"
[*Follows the others, who have already gone off, left, and now begin singing, gradually going farther away.*]

SELEUCUS (*singing, solo*).
Rose that glowest like Aphrodite's purple robe—

ALL (*chorus*). Short is your pride.

SELEUCUS. Pillar, holding aloft the shrine of Father Zeus—

ALL. You may not bide.
SELEUCUS. Twin glad eyes, look out on the world, enjoy your fill—
ALL. While lids are wide.
SELEUCUS. For ere long will close you a cold but mighty hand—
By none denied.
APELLES (*has listened in silence*). "By none denied."
Ye happy people! To be glad and die.—
My life upon its heels is treading, as
Night upon day and winter upon autumn;
'Tis an eternal winter camped upon
The cold and snowy mortcloth of dead summer.
(*Looking around.*)
Ah home, ah Vale of Tombs around me here!
Like to the souls of the departed, when
Their bodies are unburied, which, men say,
Roam round the dwellings of the dead, so I,
A living dead man, haunt this field of corpses,
Bearing my slain but yet unburied life.
From the remotest wanderings I come back,
As though the spirit named Repose had called me,
Here to the home of grief.—Ye walls yet stand,
Last remnants of my house. There rang the door
Unwillingly when Phoebe fled from me
And took my spring with her.—Before *you* there, (*Turning toward the basilica.*)
Much lauded work of mine, lay in the dust
The glory of my summer, Persida,
Who madly gave herself unto a heaven
That banished me.—And you my temple yonder,
House of my goddess, Fortune called, but curses
I called upon her last. For on her threshold
My gentle Nymphas breathed away his soul;
My late, my purest joy, my evening star,
Hope, comfort, all!—And yet I cannot die.

Longinus died — not I. The weary perish,
The weeping and the laughing — generations
And people perish — temples fall to earth —
Not I, not I! Like to the moon and stars
My life rolls on, for high in heaven stands
"Forever" written, flaming through the night
In which I restless wander.— Death, I call thee!
If ere the cry of mortals — but alas!
I am not mortal — if the fervent voice
Of a lost wanderer, weary with his crying,
May reach thine ear, thou ferryman of the dead,
Then come, I would go down!

SCENE III

PAUSANIAS *comes out from the remains of* APELLES' *house, as in Act IV, but without the lyre.*

PAUSANIAS. You see, I hear you.
Am I now welcome, and will those twin friends
Of yours, Pleasure and Work, no longer drive
Me forth from you?

APELLES. I would go down. Away
Are pride and scorn; I'm weary unto death.
Pleasure! I have drunk pleasure to the lees.
And now my only toil is, to live on.
Ye stalwart limbs, accurst be ye! For dry
Is all the joy and impulse of existence.
Dead are my days, I wander over tombs.
He only truly lives who lives in others,—
Who grows in them, in them renews himself;
When that is over, then, oh earth, be opened,
Send a new race of mortals to the light,
And us devour, who only seem to live!
(*To* PAUSANIAS.)
Lead me away! And if the sign of life
Is graven on this forehead,
(*Strikes his brow with clenched fist.*)
be it shattered;

I am a man, I have the right of death,
And like all other mortals I would perish.
[*Throws himself on the ground.*]

PAUSANIAS. Though you would die, I have not power to slay you.
Here lay the Christian, and the spirit's voice
Passed judgment on you by her lips: "Thou shalt
Forever wake without the sleep of death!"
At length you call me? How you scorned me erst,
The "spirit of hell," the "monster!" Do you know
Me better? Quite so monstrous am I not.
I'm the Consoler too, the "Care-Releaser,"
Who lays the weary head upon the pillow
And heals the pain that knows no other sleep.
And who stands pledge, that I shall be the last
Of all the slumbers? that this hand does not
Slowly and softly — or with grating harshness —
Ope but the door that leads into the light?
To otherwhere? To — who can tell?

APELLES. No matter.
Be who you may. 'Tis you I want, 'tis Death.

PAUSANIAS (*shakes his head*).
I have no part in you.

APELLES. What's life to me?
How shall I live?

PAUSANIAS. In patience.

APELLES. That I cannot.
Patience is dead, with all in me that's dead.
Only remembrance lives within my soul,
A poison, deeply wounding, but not killing.
Give me oblivion!

PAUSANIAS. 'Tis at my disposal,
But for my chosen ones. The living only
Can give it to the living.— Look you there:

Toward yonder church you built so long ago,
Which, with the temple, earth and fire demolished,
So that the sky looks in upon the floor
You ornamented with your bright mosaics.—
Behold!

APELLES. I do but see a woman there,
Led by a boy.

PAUSANIAS. Do you but look.

APELLES. She seems
Still young, her cheek is pale though, and a mantle
Enfolding, half conceals her countenance.
Her serious air accords with melancholy,
Yet 'tis not sad — (*Suddenly.*) Ye gods!

PAUSANIAS. Well, what's amiss?

APELLES. That is the Christian! Zoe!

PAUSANIAS (*smiling*). How you're dreaming!
The dead return not.—It may be, in eye,
In hair, in this or that the two are like.
Look closer.

APELLES. 'Tis not Zoe. Her I saw
Uncounted years since.
(*Pointing to his forehead.*)
Vaguely glimmers yet
Her likeness here;—but suddenly methought
She walked again and looked into my face,
(*Shivering.*)
With that mysterious glance.—She looks away;
Yon other.—Noble is her form. Yet walks she
Slowly, with effort.

PAUSANIAS. She has lost her strength.
The time the earthquake tumbled down that roof,
It buried her, her child and husband. Them
They found both killed; her, covered with the wreck,
But by a wonder she awoke to life,

And folk believe it as a wonder still.
They also think the grace of God bestowed
On her oblivion: for none has heard her
Lament for those she lost.

Apelles. Oblivion!—
Ye gods!

Pausanias. Behold her still.

Apelles. Around her stand
Women and children; men are coming, too.—
She talks with each, kindly and charmingly;—
She smiles as well. A youthful smile, it seems;
(*In dreamy wonder.*)
As from the days gone by; for wondrously
It minds me of—

Pausanias. Let rest the days gone by.
She talks with all, because she fain would help;
These people here, who look on her as holy
And blest of God, are begging her for counsel,
Assistance, comfort, even miracles.—
Why do you start?

Apelles. She comes, and looks again
With that mysterious look; the very glance
With which she wrote on me the curse of living.

Pausanias. Hush! Stand aside!

SCENE IV

ZENOBIA *enters. She is young and pale, in a dark dress, her head covered, in which she resembles* ZOE. (*The part is played by the same actress.*) *With her a* BOY *on whom she leans; behind her an* OLD MAN, *several women and children* (*all out of the basilica*).

Zenobia (*to the women*). Now go. I thank you, thank you
E'en for your thanks; he who would thank yet more,
Let him give praise to God—where it belongs.
[*One of the women tries to kiss* ZENOBIA'S *dress; she prevents her.*]

Let go my dress! Would you again degrade
Yourself so far by making me august!
I'll know you, then, no more.
[*The woman shrinks away in embarrassment with her child.* ZENOBIA *with a friendly smile calls her back.*]
A word still.—Let
Me kiss your child again.
[*The child runs to her; she kisses it. Then to the mother.*]
Love it with *patience,*
And 'twill have sunshine.—Go!
[*Exeunt mother and child, after the others, who have gone out, left. Only the* OLD MAN *remains.*]
What would you more?
I told you freely I was no enchantress.
I cannot lengthen life—and will not either.
If you so closely cling to life, old man,
Go to the doctor and beseech *his* aid.
[OLD MAN *moves off painfully, propped on a stick, coughing.* ZENOBIA *looks after him compassionately.*]
So sick!—and loves it still, his wretched life!
[*She sits on a stone in contemplation. Exit* OLD MAN, *left.*]

APELLES (*has watched* ZENOBIA *with increasing emotion; aside*).
How many faces I behold in hers!
Ye changing aspects, that my life has seen
Blossom and wither, do ye flit across
Yon unknown countenance like the varied hues
That tinge the rainbow wrought of dewy light?
Approaches here the spirit, reincarnate,
Which, living on from one form to another,
Has stood so often in my path, as if
To say: while thou hast clung unchangeably

To this one form which calls itself Apelles,
And as an empty shade outlived thyself;
Through form to form I passed in zigzag fashion,
But still progressing onward to my goal?—
I will, I must entreat her.

ZENOBIA (*has again looked toward the left; to the* BOY).
Elabel!
The old man sits down yonder. Go and give him
A gold piece. Leave me then. I want to sit here
(*Smiling.*)
And to do nothing. Come back in an hour.
[*Exit* BOY, *left.* APELLES *approaches.*]

APELLES. Forgive my prayer. You—who, if not a saint,
Are good and tender-hearted—if you be
Another aspect of the soul which has
So wondrously companioned me; or if
The grace of God has granted you oblivion
Of what you erstwhile suffered: help me too
Unto this boon, this balsam of the gods,
The half at least of death; Oblivion!

ZENOBIA (*regarding him long and with deep thought*).
Who are you?—For I know you not. And yet—
In dreams I saw you. In a magic twilight,
A strange, mysterious dimness of the mind
I saw you;—not so gray—first young—then older,
And older yet. . . . The dimness hovers round me,
A vision of the soul.—Wonderful stranger,
Do you not know me too? I'm called Zenobia.

APELLES. Not Zoe?—Phoebe?

ZENOBIA (*looks at him wonderingly*). No.—And yet they run,
These names you speak of, like to distant flashes
Of lightning through the darkness of my dream.
Then living shapes rise up, come near, and grow
Into my being and are I. And more,
I see into the future . . . Now the mist!—
(*Smiling.*)

Forgive. I often dream so. Hence believe
The mocking doubters that I've lost my wits,
The pious often hail me as a saint.
But both are wrong. I have but yielded me
Unto the will of God, who sorely proves me,
But comforts too with awful, sweet presagings.
Meanwhile I would be kind and good to all men,
And so be ripening ever for the future,
Until the Spirit calls with: Follow me,
The day is dawning!

APELLES (*shaken, after a long silence*). Yes, I now recall.
Thou riddle full of wonder, that so often
Hast come across my path; thou lovely flame
Of manifold life! At last I comprehend
The holy Master's meaning, but — too late.
The vital spirit leaps from form to form;
Narrow is man's existence, one shape only
Mid thousands can it seize on and evolve,
Can hold but that; then let it strive not toward
The teeming ocean of eternity,
Which only God can fill! — If it endure,
In *change* it blooms, as thou, from form to form
Widening its narrow nature, clarifying
Till in pure light 'tis glorified. And we,
Perchance, may slowly ripen unto God.—
A beauteous dream! — But not for me. My curse
Is fixed. I wander forth upon my way.
Farewell, Zenobia.

[*Goes slowly to the columns. The mysterious music of Act I sounds again.* ZENOBIA *listens with awakening spirit.*]

ZENOBIA (*after a pause, with changed look and solemn voice*).
Apelles!

APELLES (*stands still*). Call'st
Thou me by name?

ZENOBIA. 'Tis but by some foreknowledge.
And now mine eye is clear: upon thy forehead
I see engraved the sign that makes thee sleepless.
And a voice cries: Let now deliverance
Be his who, sorely tested, comprehends
The mystery of life, the lore of death.
Come near to me and try if I can cool
The brow which gloweth feverish hot with life
And yearneth for refreshment.

[*He sinks before her; she lays a hand on his forehead.*]

APELLES. O Zenobia!—
Ah yes, thy hand is cool. A gentle shock
Of coldness thrills through me from head to heart,—
A sweet cessation.—Ah, if thus my soul
Might fade across into the night of peace,
Never to wake!

ZENOBIA. Or to some other where.

SONG (*of the young Palmyrans in the distance, subdued, in chorus*).
So decrees all-powerful Zeus: thou must now,
Deep beneath the blossoming earth descending,
Kiss the lips of shadowy Persephoneia,
Lovely Adonis!

APELLES (*as they sing*).
That is the song.—They're coming back already.—
'Twas the last song of Nymphas . . . My last, too?
Is't no illusion?—Darker grow the heavens.
No, 'tis within mine eyes here.

[*His gaze becomes fixed.*]

Like Adonis
Shall I return to daylight?

ZENOBIA. Thou shalt learn.

APELLES. So be it then.— O Mother Earth farewell!
I loved you much — for you to me were sweet —
Bloom now for others! — All ye living things,
Oh be ye glad, and blossom in the sun!
Apelles goes to rest.
[PAUSANIAS *stands behind* APELLES *and quietly takes his upraised hand.*]
Another hand
Touches me; cold.—'Tis thou! — I give thee thanks.
[*Dies.— The song continues through the other strophes, approaching.*]
(*Curtain.*)

THE LIFE OF LUDWIG ANZENGRUBER

By Adolf Busse, Ph.D.
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AUSTRIA'S representation among the really great writers who have effectively assisted in the development of German literature during the nineteenth century is not very large. But the few who were called to help this cause are usually named among the best known, and, what is of special significance, the most popular authors because they have mostly written for the large masses of the people. One of the most prominent writers of this kind was Ludwig Anzengruber, a typical Austrian and a Viennese with all the marked characteristics of these people.

He was born in the capital of Austria, November 29, 1839. The love for poetry and poetizing came to him as an inheritance, for his father, an underpaid clerk in one of the government offices, used his leisure hours in writing lyric poetry and composing dramas. But this noble occupation bore very little fruit for the elder Anzengruber. Few of his poems and none of his dramatic writings ever appeared in print during his lifetime; only one of his dramas was played from manuscript at Budapest, and that only once. Those who knew him, however, had to admit that he possessed poetic talent which needed only favorable conditions for its proper development. By overwork he undermined his health and found an early grave, dying in 1844, when his son Ludwig was not quite five years old.

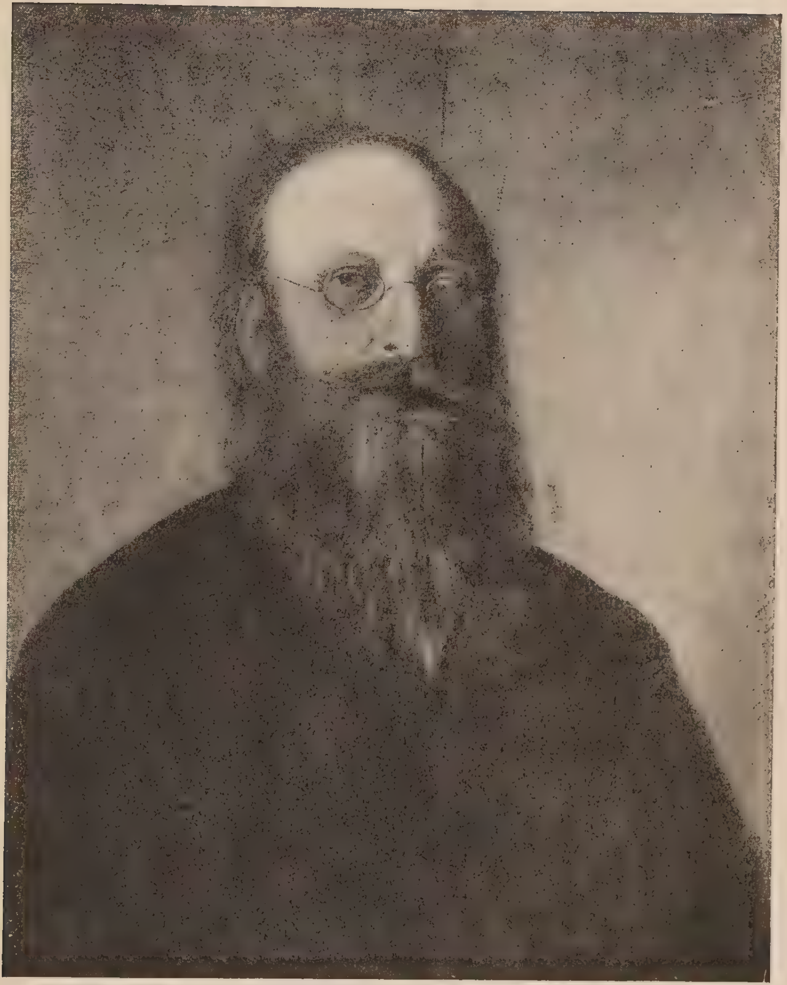
Determined to give her son the education and training which his father had planned for him, the widow bravely set out to find bread and butter for herself and her boy.

Through many years she kept up the often hopeless struggle, and at last her courage and perseverance were checked by a complete breakdown of her health. Ludwig, then a boy of sixteen, had gradually lost interest in the dry routine of his daily school task and was therefore far less sorry than his mother when he could lay aside his school books and start out to earn a living for himself. Moved by the erroneous idea that a position in a bookstore would offer the most satisfactory work to a boy madly fond of reading, his mother apprenticed him to a publisher and bookseller in Vienna. He satisfied, according to his own statement, his thirst for books and reading, but he admits also that he was the laziest rascal of a salesman, and that, except under orders, he never moved his fingers to perform his duties; yet it took him a little more than two years to realize that he was not made for a salesman in a bookstore. For a time he then followed the dictates of his heart and began to intrust to pen and paper what was stirring his youthful mind. His musings about nature, his ideas concerning life and its purpose, and his notions on political problems of the day found expression in rhymed verse. Like his father he set his ideals very high. Schiller and Grillparzer were his models. Following in their path he soon found lyric and epic verse a very scanty means of expression for what he felt he was destined to preach to his country, and he therefore chose the drama as the more suitable vehicle for his ideas. But his time for literary honors had not yet come.

Not being able to find a manager who would undertake to stage his youthful productions, he left rhyme and verse alone and tried to satisfy his passion for the theatre by a different path, accepting a position in a theatrical troop and becoming an actor. As such he traveled for six years (1860–66) throughout the Austrian Empire, changing his master whenever forced by necessity. His mother, this most faithful and most patient of all mothers of poets, wandered with him from town to town during all these years.

She shared with him all the hardships of such constant traveling, enduring every privation and struggling at his side through all the disappointments which he was destined to meet in his new calling. The material profits were very small, indeed hardly sufficient to support himself and his mother. For one month's work he never received more than about fourteen dollars as a maximum salary; such a sum represented, even at that time, when lamenting about the high cost of living was not the order of the day, true starvation wages. We hear of only one day of real sunshine during these six years. In 1865 his director had accepted one of his plays (*Temptation*) and staged it while the troop was playing at Marburg in Styria. The performance was a great success, and the large audience, which had anticipated a good joke because they had not expected anything serious from the pen of the awkward actor, received the play with much applause. Yet fortune smiled at him only once, and it is hard to comprehend how the young man with such high aspirations could endure the life of a wandering actor for six long years.

At last he went back to Vienna, '' the focus of intellectual life,'' as he at this time called his home town. Again he wielded his pen, revising old plays and composing new ones. But no matter how often he went around with them from one theatre office to another, there was no manager who was willing to give the young writer a second chance. Only a number of short stories which he had written as a diversion from his play-writing were accepted by *The Wanderer,* a weekly with a considerable circulation. Some of these plays and stories, among them *The Letter that Killeth, Angry Diana, The Gloomy Epitaph,* and *Polizze* were later counted among his best pieces. Their technique and character-delineation show grave defects, but they are written with much dramatic power and in a masterly style. The compensation for these stories was, of course, very small. He realized that he could not depend on Dame Fortune for a living and, therefore, after another short engagement as an actor on



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LUDWIG ANZENGRUBER

a suburban stage, gladly accepted an insignificant clerkship at the police headquarters of Vienna; being thus sure of a small but certain income, he continued his incessant striving more independently and more securely.

He had gradually conceived a definite aim for his literary endeavors. His ambition was to become a master of the *Volksstück,* that type of the drama which had been popular with the burghers of Vienna for more than a century. The humble, narrow, but nevertheless interesting life of the common people was represented in these plays. Their form was loose and their scenes, changing in quick succession, were full of either comic features and surprises or acts of extreme cruelty, the better to satisfy the vulgar taste of the audience. Verisimilitude of the whole plot or of the details of the action was not strictly demanded, but sentimental features were absolutely indispensable. The names of the *dramatis personæ* were symbolical or comical, or at least signified the peculiarities of the characters. Comic songs were a leading characteristic; the audience would not have been satisfied if they had not had a full share of them. On the whole these plays were not written for the uplift of the masses, but rather for the satisfaction of a vulgar taste and of curiosity; none of them was played for any length of time. The authors were mostly actors who had a first-hand knowledge of the possibilities and tricks of the stage; with very few exceptions their names are not recorded in the histories of German literature. Such men as Kaiser, Nestroy, and Raimund may deserve special mention, however, because some of their productions rose considerably above the low level of the general output.

Anzengruber chose this field because he saw great possibilities for a development to a higher and nobler sphere. Moreover he was, as he said himself, a son of the common people and knew no other life so intimately as the life of this stratum of society. When he undertook to make himself the master-exponent of this type of the drama, he did not overestimate his ability. The very first play, *The*

Rector of the Kirchfeld Parish, which he wrote after he had entered upon his duties as a police clerk, was destined to be his first real success. In this play he raised his voice in favor of true liberalism and freedom of thought. Rev. Bright, the young rector of the Kirchfeld parish, is eager to proclaim the doctrine of genuine love and good fellowship, not only by word of mouth but by noble example. Soon, however, enemies spring up right and left; the worst among them is "Wurzelsepp" (Joe, the Root-Digger), who is at odds with himself and the whole world. The intolerance of the rector's predecessor has robbed Sepp of all happiness of life and love; he thinks he has a chance to avenge himself on the clergy whom he now hates as a class. Bright has taken into his house a pretty young orphan girl. Sepp is watching them very closely, in order to catch words here and there which he can use against the rector. He soon accuses him, though without any foundation in fact, of improper conduct, and excites the whole congregation by his accusations. But the parson does not strike back. As arranged before the trouble came to a head, he marries Anna to a worthy and prosperous young farmer. He even does not deny the blessing of the church to the body of Sepp's mother, although she died by committing suicide. But all his acts of self-denial are futile. The consistory has taken up Sepp's accusations and calls Bright before the clerical court, which removes him from his parish. However, when he leaves the village, it is with these words of hopefulness for his church: "I am going to suffer punishment; but I shall wait quietly what the future will bring. Perhaps a free church in the Fatherland will call her faithful son back from exile."

In this drama Anzengruber had embodied all the characteristics of the *Volksstück,* even the songs. But by giving it a noble purpose and by observing strictly the artistic rules of dramatic technique, he at once raised the *Volksstück*, as a type, from its low level and gave it a place among the recognized forms of the drama. The play made a deep impression wherever it was acted, and even today it is one of the most popular of the author's plays. Bettelheim, one of Anzengruber's younger contemporaries, said, after its first presentation in Vienna, " The right man has appeared at the right time and in the right place." Rosegger, the present Nestor among the German writers of provincial novels, sent a very favorable review to a Vienna newspaper, and this indorsement moved the whole press of the capital to give Anzengruber the recognition that was due to him.

A few days after Rosegger's article the two writers met. Rosegger, still full of joy over Anzengruber's play, said to him, " You may write as many more plays as you wish, but you will never produce anything greater than your *Rector.*" Anzengruber calmly replied, " I shall indeed write a still greater play." He was not mistaken about his own future. The theatres of the common people had been lacking a repertoire of good plays, and since no one else was ready and willing to preach art and culture to these people from the stage, he set out to perform what he considered his duty. In 1872, a year after the *Rector,* his next play, *The Farmer Forsworn* (reproduced in this volume), was staged. And the poet kept his word; the play was greater and stronger than its immediate forerunner. It is a powerful tragedy — from the literary and critical point of view perhaps the most accomplished play he has written.

Not because of its somewhat gruesome plot was this tragedy soon known and played throughout Germany, but rather because of its convincing style and its very concise form. This time, the critics were unanimous in their praise of Anzengruber; one of them went so far as to compare the play with *King Lear.* Though it may have dealt very severe and painful blows to the theatre-goers of the poet's day and, though its somewhat harrowing details may be too harsh even for the theatre public of today, yet the drama will live as a masterpiece of German literature.

It was but natural that the successful presentation of two such plays should strengthen the poet's confidence in himself. He resigned his position as government clerk and prepared to devote himself once more entirely to his art. In quick succession he wrote a number of similar plays during the next decade. In the same year, hardly nine months after the first presentation of *The Farmer Forsworn,* another drama, *The Cross Markers,* was brought on the stage and was well received by public and critics. It is a fine comedy of woman's shrewdness. The farmers of the village of Zwentdorf are about to express in writing their allegiance to the Old-Catholic Party, the opponents of the dogma of papal infallibility; but some of the signers of this declaration, unable to write their names, sign merely by cross marks. The clergymen are anxious to thwart this act of disloyalty to the church, and, aroused by them, the wives of the apostates deny their husbands all conjugal relations until they have repented and made a pilgrimage to Rome. One of the signers, Hanns, the Stone-breaker, hits upon a capital idea. He proposes that the young unmarried women of the village should form a club and accompany the penitents. The girls are at once ready to enter into this conspiracy. The wives are now, of course, more concerned about their own marital rights than about the eternal salvation of their husbands; the pilgrimage is called off, and all former relations are restored.

The play is by no means a mere farce. We see at once that the author treats a very serious problem of the day. It is entirely in accord with his conception of life that he embodies it in a comedy and ridicules the attempt to suppress rational convictions; however, he wishes to drive home more than one well-known but often forgotten moral principle. Hanns, the Stone-breaker, the typical peasant sage, is the real expounder of Anzengruber's sound and optimistic views of life. The author has bestowed a great deal of care on the delineation of this character and made him his favorite figure — so much so that he later became the principal character of a number of short stories. In spoken and written utterance of his later life the poet delights in quoting his Hanns whenever possible.

With the next play, *Elfriede* (1873), the poet left the path he had heretofore followed, taking plot and characters from the recognized circles of " society," in order to depict a marital crisis through which, however, both parties pass without harm. The poet ventured to offer the play to the *Burgtheater* of Vienna, at that time still the leading German theatre. It was accepted, carefully staged, and well acted, but the audience, composed, as is ordinarily the case at the *Burgtheater,* of a very conservative set of people, declined to follow the author. It was more or less a failure — a result which was all the more unfortunate for Anzengruber, as for a long time it barred his return to the same stage and thus made the recognition of his work as one of the leading German dramatists more difficult.

Two weeks after the first performance of *Elfriede* the poet married Adeline Lipka, the sister of a friend of his school-days. Happy as the day of his wedding may have been for him, it occurred in a year (1873) that brought to him nothing but misfortune and disappointments. His dearly beloved mother passed through a critical illness and soon after that he experienced a complete failure with his next play, *The Daughter of the Usurer* (1873). With a truly astounding tenacity he wrote at the end of the year to his publisher, " The triumph which I have afforded my enemies shall be of short duration." Again he was a good prophet of his fate. Another peasant play, *The Worm of Conscience* (1874), regained to him what he had lost in prestige by the preceding failures. It is another protest against bigotry and gloomy, doleful views of life, and a strong sermon on the necessity and value of a good conscience. But, as a pathfinder, Anzengruber was bound to lose the right direction now and then and to commit serious mistakes, in spite of his good intentions. In *Heart and Hand,* which he wrote after the *Worm of Conscience,* he overstocked his plot with gruesome scenes and over-emphasized the sentimentalities of the peasant play. The stress the critics laid on this weakness, and a very poor first performance, were the reasons why the piece very soon disappeared from the stage.

Undismayed, however, he did not let fortune or misfortune influence his productivity. With *The Double Suicide* (1876), a comedy overflowing with fun and humor, he won back the admirers he had disappointed by his former play. At the same time he published a novel, *The Badge of Shame,* in a weekly, *Die Heimat.* With this work he fell in line with such famous writers of provincial novels as Gotthelf, Auerbach, Rosegger, and others. His novel showed the same individuality of style, the same convincing form of argumentation, and the same intimate knowledge of life as his dramas. Against his own will he yielded, however, to the request of the editors and laid the scene of the second half of the story in Vienna, thereby doing considerable harm to the otherwise normal development of plot and characters. Later he rewrote the second part in accordance with his original conceptions; under the pretense that a number of American friends were interested in his work, an admirer induced the poet to accept a present of a thousand florins so that he might have the necessary time and leisure for this revision.

This first successful novel was followed by two plays, *The Farm without a Farmer* (1876) and *The Fourth Commandment* (1878), both fully measuring up to the standard he had set by his former plays. The latter, especially, shows the same vigor of style and the same didactic force as *The Farmer Forsworn.* The author takes the Austrian capital for a background and uncovers with rigid truthfulness the corruption of certain lower *bourgeois* circles. The moral which he aims to drive home is found at the end of this tragedy of parenthood, where a young criminal says to a priest, the friend of his boyhood days, ‘‘You do not know what it means for some people to have been reared by their own parents. When you teach your children, 'Honor your father and your mother,' do not fail to preach from the pulpit to their parents that they must show themselves worthy of this honor.'' It was an almost cruel picture, and the censor insisted on several changes in the original text. Such criticism, however, could not affect Anzengruber's eagerness to preach the plain truth, and he continued on the path which he considered right. Among the plays which he sent out after this tragedy must be mentioned as the most notable: *Old Citizens of Vienna, The Reversed Wooing,* and *The Blow with the Fist.* Some are just as gruesome as *The Fourth Commandment,* others as exuberant as *The Cross Markers,* but he never touched the hearts of his followers so deeply as in the former, nor did he ever depict life again in such vivid colors.

Noble was the service which Anzengruber endeavored to render to his country, but it was a service without proper compensation. Circumstances were constantly against him. In 1873, the financial crisis forced many theatre directors to close their houses, and the great theatre conflagrations, especially that of the Burg theatre in 1881, had a bad effect upon theatre attendance. These reverses made the otherwise miserable conditions of the playhouses in Austria almost hopeless and affected seriously the poet's income, especially since the book market was also very poor. In order to secure again a regular living income, he accepted in 1880 the offer of a coeditorship in *Die Heimat,* the weekly that had printed his novel, *The Badge of Shame.* But he detested the reading of manuscripts of undesirable and mediocre contributions. Only the strong sense of duty toward his family induced him to endure patiently the hardship of his position and forced him later even to accept the place of a coeditor of the comic journal *Figaro.* During the period of his official relations with *Die Heimat* he contributed a number of short stories and novels, of which *The Sternstein Farm* is to be mentioned as one of the best. Once more the poet builds up an action full of well outlined characters and strong scenes, entering deeply into life and the terrible conflicts of a disgraced woman's soul. But, again, he also proves himself the idealist who believes firmly in conciliation, in the adjustment of all differences, and in the final solution of all problems.

In his noble striving, fate treated him with its customary irony. The common people whom he wished to serve often hesitated to bestow their full approval, but the men prominent in the arts and sciences, to whom he, in his modesty, never looked for recognition, esteemed him highly. With other poets he shared in the award of three of the most coveted prizes for high achievement in German literature: in 1878, the Schiller Prize, the protectorate of which is in the hands of the German Emperor; in 1887, the Grillparzer Prize, whose jury is composed of the most eminent men of letters in Germany and Austria; and in 1888, through the influence of Gustav Freytag, the J. P. Müller Prize. Much as he appreciated these distinctions, there was a deep undertone of feeling in him that the public, the daily press, and the critics were withholding the full share of recognition due him. It is, therefore, not surprising that the poet gradually lost his bright naïveté, his inner harmony, and his faith in the goodness of humanity. The many disappointments began to tell on his health, and in his unceasing struggle for daily bread his body broke down early. A few days after his fiftieth birthday, on the 10th of December, 1889, he finished his earthly course.

Anzengruber was a pioneer as a man and as a poet. His ambition was to be a liberator of his countrymen from the destructive falsehoods of life and from the misery into which a mendacious idolatry and empty worship of authority had led his nation. He wished to regain for them wholesome and ever invigorating truth, and faith in what is good and noble. His optimism is best expressed in the words of Hanns, the Stone-breaker — " I felt as if some one said to me: ' Nothing can happen to you; even the greatest amount of suffering does not count, when life is gone; you belong to the universe and the universe belongs

ANZENGRUBER MONUMENT AT VIENNA

to you.'" While it may appear as if at times he merely photographed life in his dramas, he nevertheless looked at the great problems of society with the eye of the true poet. Even where he uses what he calls "semi-dialect" it is not merely for realistic but much more for truly artistic effects. He aimed to proclaim truth, but only the truth ennobled by his artistic personality. It is reported that once, in a circle of friends, he professed to be an enthusiastic admirer of Schiller, and soon afterward acknowledged himself also as an adherent of Ibsen. We know already that the first statement is true. Schiller may not have been his model in regard to the choice of plots or heroes and heroines, but he was his teacher in regard to the style and composition of his plays. With Ibsen he was marching on the same road, both fighting for the independence of the individual. Anzengruber, writing chiefly for his Austrian countrymen, is, perhaps, historically not as great, in his views not as cosmopolitan, and in his style not as intellectual as Ibsen. But he is undoubtedly the more pleasing and the more optimistic poet. What he endeavored to be for his followers he once expressed in a letter, saying that he sometimes felt as if he had raised himself with great efforts above the masses, and now, seeing them below with the same yearning for light and freedom, his heart urged him to call out to them—"Come up here; yonder path leads up to our heights."

LUDWIG ANZENGRUBER

THE FARMER FORSWORN

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

Matthias Ferner,	*owner of Crossroads Farm*
Crescence Frank	*his children*
Andrew Hellerer,	*owner of Adam Farm*
Toni,	*his son*
The Foreman	
Biddy Mattie Barbara Annie Maggie	*Maid-servants on Hellerer's Farm*
Micky,	*cowherd*
Lizzy Burger,	*an old woman*
Jacob Veroni	*her grandchildren*
Levy,	*a pedlar*
Aunty o' the Woods	
Rosie Katie	*her nieces*
The Barber of Ottenschlag	
First Second	*Smugglers*

Smugglers, rustics from the Crossroads Farm, from Altranning, and from Ottenschlag

THE FARMER FORSWORN (1872)

TRANSLATED BY ADOLF BUSSE, PH.D.

Associate Professor of German, Hunter College, New York

ACT I

A farm yard. Through the open barn at the rear one can look into the garden. The buildings to the right and left are level with the yard. To the left the farmer's house adjoining the barn; to the right the servants' quarters extending to the last side wing, through which all who come from the street enter. In the right foreground a well, with a stand for the draw bucket and the vessels to be filled. An empty bucket and a watering can lie before it.

SCENE I

FOREMAN (*from the house to the right. In Sunday clothes, like all the other people in the act; about fifty years old, his hair streaked with gray, his tanned features strongly marked. Lighting his short pipe he advances to the bucket and the watering can, which he touches slightly with his foot*). Hello! Here's another one who's had a narrow squeeze to get to early mass. It's wonderful how they take to this church-going, and how pious the wenches are. Of course it's just for the sake of the boys. The young minxes would make the Lord Himself a matchmaker. As for me, I've got to have the church quiet; I can't stand all these chirping young sparrows, and try to put up with the second mass. But this first one, the masters' and lovers' mass, where they sprawl in the pews and pull the girls' apron-strings and step on their toes in the aisle of the church—well, I just let that go by. (*Sits down by the well and tries to light his pipe.*) It's wet, confound it, and won't burn! (*Smokes.*)

Scene II

Foreman. Veroni *in Sunday clothes, but wearing a blue apron, comes through the garden swinging a watering can; in her left hand a carnation which, after finishing the song, she fastens in her bodice.*

Veroni.

Two pinks on one stem together,
So snug in their bower of green,
Myself and my own, my true love,
There's no room for a third one between!

But Auntie, she laughed at my story,
"If that is thy true love and thou,
A bud will soon sprout up betwixt you
And find there is room there enow!"

"Oh," said I, "not yet, indeed,
No husband as yet do I need!
Doth a maiden make haste to be wed?
But we must while we can,
Let the pinks have their bed,
To a proper young lass give a man!"

(*Yodles.*)

Foreman. That you, Veroni, and still at home? Might have thought so.

Veroni. I've been watering in the garden.

Foreman. I know it. A person waiting likes to do something to pass the time.

Veroni (*pertly*). Perhaps so.

Foreman (*puffs and nods*). Surely.

Veroni (*threatens him with the watering can*). Go on, get off the stand, so I can fill my can.

Foreman (*does not stir*). What's your hurry? You're just the one I want to talk to.

Veroni (*curtsies mockingly*). Goodness, what an honor! You, the foreman, that never gives a girl on the farm anything but "Good-morning" and "Good-night" year in, year out — it's a mercy for you to talk to me, the youngest and humblest girl on the place.

THE NEW PIPE

From the Painting by Franz Defregger

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Foreman (*stares at her*). Even if you don't respect me as I know you don't, you might at least quit your foolery; that's silly joking. When everything's quiet after grace and I'm cleaning my spoon to help myself first, you always have to wink across at the younger girls, and then they nudge each other under the table and you all wipe your mouths before you've even put in a bite. We can't all dip into the bowl at once, somebody must be first, and that's my privilege as foreman — you bear that in mind.

Veroni. Well, the world wouldn't go to pieces, if the dinner came to the table all served and each one had his own plate.

Foreman. Oh yes, I don't doubt you'd like something special, that's in your blood, your mother was just like you.

Veroni. Much you know what my mother, God rest her, was like!

Foreman. I guess I do, and that's just what I want to talk to you about before it's too late. We grew up together over in Ottenschlag, she and I, and went to school together. Your grandmother — who's still running The Boundary Inn high up there in the mountains — she knew me as a little boy. I was hardly that big (*gesture*) when she married. A year later, your mother came into the world, and just when I had to stand up before the last grade with a donkey's head hung around my neck, she got her first prize in the A-B-C class. Later we left Ottenschlag at the same time and both went to work for old Ferner — knowing each other from childhood, working together among utter strangers, we'd cheer each other up when we got homesick and protect each other when the rest went for us as if they'd been nesting geese. No wonder — lively young lad as I was — that I fell in love with her, for she was friendly with me — and pretty as a picture. You've got exactly her face, but she was even prettier than you. (*Lost in contemplation of her, he drops the hand with the pipe and says to himself.*) Pretty she was, pretty as a picture.

[*Brief pause.*]

Veroni (*seating herself upon the overturned bucket*). Tell me more about my mother.

Foreman (*draws the hand with the pipe back to his knee and drops his head slightly*). At first everything went as it ought to between lovers with honest intentions. (*Sighing.*) But you see, the old Crossroads Farmer had just died and there were two boys left, Jacob, the elder, who now owned everything, and Matthias, the younger, who simply worked with the others on the big farm. Jacob, the new Crossroads Farmer, liked the women folks. Many a village girl that he's run after had her story to tell. He'd hardly seen your mother — he knew what good looks were — when he went after her too. Lord, women have always been that way: what'd be a disgrace with a common lad, they consider an honor if it's a rich young squire, and she was soon going with him. I was simply a blind Tobias, and there didn't any angel come to wipe my eyes with a fish's gall. I wouldn't believe a word of the tales they told me, and it wasn't till I found she was avoiding me that I tried to get to the bottom of it. "Veroni," I said, she had the same name as you; "Veroni," I said, "folks are talking about you and the master." She screwed up her mouth and laughed and said: "Well, suppose they are, is it anybody's business?" Said I, "Isn't it mine either?" Said she: "Yours least of all. Is there anything between us two?" Said I: "Nothing wrong." — Then she smooths down her apron and says: "It's all over." At that I tell her: "Don't worry, I'll quit my job today; the master will be glad to get rid of me, he'll be just so much surer of you. Now may God keep you! I know you're dreaming of being mistress here, and I wish you might be — but, Veroni, you're not the first and you won't be the last girl he's ruined. But when you're too common for your fine gentleman, and don't know what to do, come to me." I went straight to the master, and he did just as I'd predicted: he was glad to discharge me. But I left that same night; my heart was heavy as never before in my life — and I thought it would burst, my breast it ached so. So I came here to Altranning, here to Adam Farm, and here I am yet.

Veroni. Didn't you keep on the lookout for her?

Foreman. Indeed I did. A year later I heard she'd given birth to a boy, your brother, that nobody knows anything about now,— and yet she was still unmarried. So I went over to Crossroads Farm and talked to her and said, "Look here, Veroni, be sensible; of course you're ruined now, but trust in me; I'm still ready to take you, and we'll bring up the boy in our house. Such a little rabbit doesn't need much. When he gets bigger he'll work with us on our farm and earn his little living. Come with me, I have an old aunt, she'll lease us her little farm." Then she cried and said, "You're my true friend, I'll come to you — I'll talk with the Crossroads Farmer this very day." Talk with him she did, that's sure, and he must have had a good laugh at the simpleton who was willing to take a nest with a brood already in it, but Veroni was still too new to be given up. (*He breaks his pipe by screwing the stem into it and throws the pieces aside.*) He won her back again — and then you came — and she went on as the farmer's mistress — what happened after that you may yourself remember a good deal of. For a few years they let you and your brother run around with the chickens and the goats on the farm, seeing you had to run around somewhere! All at once folks said that the Crossroads Farmer was finally going to marry your mother, after all, and had quarreled about it with his relatives, and that on a journey to Vienna, when he took your brother along, he'd intended to settle the whole thing. But he took sick there and died in the hospital. Your mother felt sure he'd left something in writing, or that his word was good, and so she began a lawsuit. Matthias, who became the owner of the farm and also your guardian after the death of his brother, kept quiet for awhile and left your mother on the farm. But no will was found, the lawsuit went against you, and after that — he drove you out into misery and shame.

VERONI (*shaking her head mournfully*). Why do you tell a child about her mother's shame?

FOREMAN (*rising*). So it'll be a lesson to you. You're starting out to make the same blunder. (*Walks up to her, and lays his hand on her shoulder.*) This isn't the first Sunday you've sneaked back into the garden to wait for the master's son while the servants were in church.

VERONI (*rising, defiantly*). No, it isn't the first.

FOREMAN. But the last — if you've got any sense. You won't be the mistress of Adam Farm any more than your mother was of Crossroads Farm.

VERONI. I don't see why you're so mad that Toni loves me.

FOREMAN. Take my word! Do you think his father won't interfere when he finds out? And let me tell you, you can't even fool yourself with a shadow of hope as your mother could, for Toni can only heap disgrace upon you, but never any honor, because he's been going with Ferner's Crescence as well as you this long time.

VERONI. That's a lie! — It would be just like the Crossroads Farmer to want to get his Crescence on Adam Farm just so I can never be mistress here. — He's hated me from childhood. But Toni isn't like that. You don't know how matters stand between us. Do you think I ran after him? No, he came to me. When they chased us away from Crossroads Farm we went to my granny at Ottenschlag and stayed there — until mother died. Toni did lots for her up to the very end, because he saw how her misery hurt me — that's how I began to like him. And when he asked me at her death-bed if I cared for him, I told him if he meant it honestly I could love him. At that he took me away from there and brought me here to Adam Farm, because Jews and smugglers stop at my aunt's taproom and often hide their goods there, and the old woman — may the Lord change her heart in her death hour — has no God and no faith. He needed a godly, Christian wife, he said.

Foreman. Oh, of course, these model Christians in their carven pews like the pious girls that submit to everything without a fuss. But the master's son didn't tell you that it was arranged for him as a child to marry Ferner's Crescence, hey?

Veroni. That may be the others' plan, but Toni can't agree to it. Why should he have coaxed me to leave my granny? Do you s'pose it didn't hurt the old woman when I left her? — She even threatened me: I'd come back to her some day just as my mother did. (*Seriously.*) Toni can't say "Yes."

Foreman. But he can't have said "no" either. The folks from Crossroad Farm have come over here to church today and they'll meet the master and Toni there. Ferner's son, the student, has been called home from the city too. He's expected today or tomorrow. That means there's some business afoot, and I suppose everything is to be settled in short order. It's high time for you to pack up and go, for you can't stay here and remain an honest woman.

Veroni (*defiantly*). I'm much obliged to you for your good advice, but I think all this would be such a grief to me that I ought to look after it myself — then I can still decide whether to go or stay. I can't see why you bother yourself so much about it.

Foreman. Why I'm interested, you say? Why, I was your mother's true friend — God rest her. No one loved her as I did. I haven't yet got over what she did to me, and yet I have a strange feeling in my heart when I think of her, and no other woman like her ever came my way, nor ever will. Upon my soul, when I see you standing there before me, I think it's she; that's just her defiant way and manner; you've got it all from her. But give it up; once I liked it in her myself, but give it up, Veroni, get those notions out of your head, no matter how high they fly. Be the poor, honest, good girl your mother was, when she and I left Ottenschlag together. Don't disgrace your mother in her grave by refusing to learn anything from her, as if her hard work and her embittered miserable life didn't have a lesson or meaning for you. (*Church bells.*) They're ringing for the second mass, I must go now. I've done more talking than the pastor can do today in church — and I've stirred up all these old memories. But, Good Lord, I'd rather have it this way than have it come over me at night — how it has been and how it might have been. But on Sunday nothing can disturb me; then I take my prayer-book and listen to the organ playing. (*In a friendlier tone, pulling carefully out of his coat-pocket a prayer-book wrapped in a kerchief.*) See here, Veroni, with this I take my seat for the second mass in the corner of a pew right among the folks with the patched up coats. (*He cautiously unlocks the book and opens it half way.*) Here's a little violet from the brook where we had our first talk as lovers, and a few pages farther on are the wild roses from the shrub on her grave. I brought 'em once from Ottenschlag. (*He closes the book and puts it back carefully.*) And when I put that book on the book rack in front of me in church I can fairly see before me the places where I've spent my days — there lies the little village of Ottenschlag 'way down in the valley, and 'way up there the pretty Boundary Inn — small as a swallow's nest — farther on, only a two hours' walk, Crossroads Farm and two hours beyond that Altranning — and I wonder how a man can live through so much within a circle of only four hours' walk; — and everything stands out before my mind as if it had happened only yesterday — and now the organ starts — and I think to myself that once in his life everybody has had crossroads where things went very wrong, but that, with God's help, everybody can at last find his Altranning and become foreman. And then I ask myself whether I'd be satisfied if I hadn't gone through all that and everything was different from the way it is — and I look at my two little flowers and say "No," and my heart warms up and here inside I feel so quiet. Those are my Sundays. Now God be with you, Veroni; — and think over what I've told you. [*Exit.*]

Scene III

Veroni (*alone*). "Think it over" and "Give up your defiant way!" What little words folks use, even when they ask the hardest things. My dear foreman, if what you say was true, what would there be to think about? I'd have to run out into the wide world so the folks in the village wouldn't fling fresh mud and shame at me tomorrow, on top of the old. And what is left me, that has enabled me to hold up my head, except my defiance, my only and my oldest friend, that has grown up with me? Get rid of it? — Can I be what I am not? — and haven't they all done their share to make me as I am? Didn't the other children in the village use to point their fingers at me? "Aw, look at her, she hasn't got any father." Doesn't every one of them make me feel to this day that I really shouldn't be in the world; because my coming wasn't a joy to anybody and my staying has made nothing but trouble? — But

I'm here now. And it's father's or mother's fault, certainly not mine; and if God allowed it, I expect I'm just as dear to Him as those that come into the world with the sacrament. (*She laughs and passes both hands over her brow and head.*) Silly, here I am getting hot about some gossip and yet it remains to be seen how much of it is true. Toni shall tell me himself what there is to the story. (*She busies herself with the bucket and the watering can.*)

Scene IV

Veroni, Toni, Crescence, Ferner, Hellerer (*from the right*). Toni, *leading* Crescence *by the hand, comes in first and walks forward, then the two men appear on the back stage.*

Crescence (*entering*). No, not that I insist on it, if it doesn't suit you, but on account of the gossip I wish you'd come every day to our farm now, so they'll see we care for each other. Is it perhaps expecting too much of you to have the horse hitched up?

Toni. Not at all. It shall be just as you say.

Veroni. Toni! (*controls herself, walks up to him, strokes her hair from her forehead, and says with a bitter smile.*) Good morning, Toni. I waited in the garden as usual, why didn't you come?

Crescence. What does she want?

Toni (*lets* Crescence's *hand go and steps up to* Veroni — *in an undertone*). You know what they intend to do with me? — Be sensible, Veroni! I must talk with you about it in secret. (*Steps quickly back to* Crescence.)

Veroni (*aloud*). You want to talk to me in secret? Most likely it wouldn't be easy for you to tell me before her what you've got to say (*pointing to* Crescence); anyway, there's no need of your talking any more but what I have to say to you the whole world can hear. (Ferner *and* Hellerer *have come forward.*)

FERNER (*thickset figure, worn features, a large rosary and a large prayer-book in his hand; stepping between them*). Girl, shut your mouth.

TONI. Don't meddle here.

FERNER (*seriously*). You go into the garden with Crescence. To quarrel with that girl there before your future wife isn't proper.

TONI. If it wasn't for Crescence's sake —

VERONI (*bitterly*). Be off, you're getting out of this pretty easily. [TONI *and* CRESCENCE *off through the barn.*]

FERNER (*standing squarely before* VERONI). Now I'm going to do the talking here and I'll be through with you in a minute.

VERONI (*facing him unflinchingly*). All right, I expected you, Crossroads Farmer; you must always be on hand when a misfortune comes to me.

FERNER. Don't get spunky, but learn humility. I see only one evil on Adam Farm and that's you. Though I'm no longer your guardian — thank God, He's relieved me of that burden — still as a Christian I give you this piece of advice: Pack up and don't lead anybody into temptation, and the sooner you go the better.

VERONI. As for your guardianship, you needn't thank God that you haven't it any more; you gave it up voluntarily and I'm thankful to Him for it. And your Christian advice is unnecessary too. I know myself what I have to do. (*To* HELLERER.) Adam Farmer, if the Crossroads Farmer, who's talking and bossing on this farm today gives you permission I'd like very much to have you let me leave your service today.

HELLERER. Thunder and lightning! Who should give me permission on my farm? By heaven let any one try it! I stick to what I say, and what I say goes, and if I say you'll stay out your two weeks, you'll stay.

FERNER. That'd be nonsense. I say she must leave on the spot.

Helleber. Hell and damnation! Yes — and if I say you go on the spot, then you go on the spot.

Veroni. I'd really have to burst out laughing, Adam Farmer — if I felt like laughing — at your way of playing the master. Just the same I'd like to know what you really mean; shall the two weeks' clause stand — or shall I go on the spot?

Ferner. You'll go at once; do you want to get me into trouble with my future relatives?

Helleber. Thunderation! she couldn't do that.

Ferner. You'd be capable of it. Your mother — God give her rest and forgive her her sins — made trouble on my farm too; you're her child through and through and it's from her you got this notion of hooking on to a rich fellow.

Veroni (*screams*). Jesus, Mary! Would you defame my poor mother in her grave? (*Pushes her hair back and steps close to* Ferner.) Lord God! and if this should be my last hour, Crossroads Farmer, I'll pay you back for that. Do you think because you're still running about on the earth that you can blacken those who are beneath it? I suppose you think because folks say wherever you go, "Look, there comes the rich Crossroads Farmer!" because they give you the seat of honor wherever you stop; because they look at your cushioned praying-bench in the church and think: The pious man! that you can do anything you please against the dead or the living? Rich you are, nobody can deny that; but if poverty's no disgrace, then riches can't be called an honor. But though you may be honorable and pious in public, I don't believe in your honesty nor in your piety, nor ever did from childhood on, and I'll tell you why. My dear uncle, didn't you more than once take us children, your own brother's flesh and blood, into a corner of the farm and beat and kick us without cause or reason? Oh, you fine guardian, did you ever look after us? Couldn't we have gone to ruin body and soul, for all you cared, as my brother did go? You have no heart in your body, or you wouldn't have maltreated innocent helpless children — you haven't a spark of honor in your body or you wouldn't have accepted the duty of watching over young children and then, with hands at your back, looked on while they grew up like savages; you have no Christianity in you, Crossroads Farmer, and your church-going doesn't deceive our Lord God any more than me. I don't believe you've been praying to the Lord for anything but that He shouldn't let the Devil that you deserve thrice over, get hold of your farm. When I think how we had to keep 'way out of your sight no matter where you set foot, I've always felt you had a bad conscience; that you couldn't stand us because you'd wronged us.

Ferner (*pale and agitated*). Be careful, girl; be careful what you say. (*With a lurking glance.*) What do you mean? Do you know anything?

Veroni (*more composed*). No, Farmer. But I feel so much relieved at heart, now I've got rid of what's been weighing on me this long time. If I knew as well as our Lord what prayers you've sent up to Him in your anxiety, do you think I'd have waited till today? But this I know in my soul, I do you no injustice, and I hope I can prove it yet; if that would only happen, I'd gladly take any burden of misery and want on my young life. I'd train you like a hunter training pups; you should jump for me, old as you are. Crossroads Farmer, I could actually love you when I think of how anxious I am to throw you down with my little finger, big and proud as you are. If it was anybody but you, I'd almost wish it wouldn't happen, but if it does come, then you know what's waiting for you. (*To* Hellerer, *stretching out her hand.*) Farmer, many thanks to you for my place. And now good-by to all. [*Exit.*]

Scene V

Ferner *and* Hellerer. *The background gradually fills with maid servants returning from church.* Micky *runs around among them.*

Hellerer (*to his silent neighbor*). By gracious, that girl has a tongue! How she did dress you down! But she's got a sweet voice, I like to hear her; too bad she didn't keep on talking. (*Maliciously.*) How about it, cousin? Haven't you got a few more orders on tap to give on my farm? But how pale you've got. Did that little fury hit the nail on the head? Are you afraid of her?

Ferner (*starting from his reflection*). Fool! I'm the owner of Crossroads Farm — I'm the one to be feared, I fancy. (*Sullenly.*) Our Lord won't permit me to come to harm through her. He knows what I've done for Him; how many masses I've paid for and what I've given to the church, and that I have another good work in mind with regard to my boy. I hope the Lord through His mercy will be his light, so he'll see it's for his and our salvation. Then the two farms 'll stay together and belong to my daughter.

Hellerer. Yours to your daughter; mine belongs for all time to Toni.

Ferner. My boy's coming today or tomorrow. You'd do me a favor, cousin, if you'd come along home. I haven't seen him since he was a child, and I'd like to have some one around with me the first time we face each other again.

Hellerer. I'm ready.

Ferner (*leaving*). And we'll take Toni along, too. Come on, I told the man to wait with the wagon outside by the garden fence. [*Exeunt through the barn.*]

Scene VI

The servant girls, Micky, *then* Veroni.

Servant Girls (*coming forward with* Micky *in their midst*). Come, Micky, tell us.

Mattie. How goes it up there in your pasture?

Micky (*carefully holding a bottle under his coat*). Thanks, thanks, ha ha ha! quite well! ha ha ha! Yodel sends you his best regards.

Biddy. What've you got in that bottle?

Annie. Let me taste it.

Micky (*pulls back his bottle*). Oh yes, ha ha ha, so you can swill it all and I wouldn't have anything left. (*Importantly.*) It's holy water.

Barbara. Holy water? I should think you've got enough water up there in your pasture.

Micky. Of course I have. But this is just for me (*as above*) — to drink.

All. Oh goodness, he drinks it.

Micky. Do you think I'm a heathen and haven't any religion? I can't understand a sermon, I can't remember a prayer, I can't read a prayer-book — so I just take Christianity into my insides.

Maggie. You're a capital Christian. [*All laugh.*]

Veroni *enters with a bundle.*

Micky. Tee hee hee! There's Veroni coming.

Mattie. Yes, and she's carrying a bundle!

Barbara. You going to leave us? What for?

Annie. Is everything settled between Toni and Ferner's Crescence?

Biddy. Is he going to marry her and jilt you, the horrid thing? [*All laugh.*]

Maggie. Look here, take Micky; he's a fine boy too.

MICKY. Oh yes, ha ha ha! I'll take you fast enough — ha ha ha! Had my eye on you long ago — you'd suit me — ho ho ho! [*All laugh.*]

VERONI (*sullenly*). It's funny how you can laugh when other folks are in trouble.

BIDDY. There now, brace up, or you'll be bawling; other times you're brave enough.

VERONI. If I did cry it wouldn't be because I'm hurt, but because I'm mad.

MATTIE. Goodness gracious! You little spitfire! Don't be touchy! We've always been good comrades of yours. We must sing you a few Alp songs for a farewell so your heart'll be glad.

MATTIE.

My sweetheart is handsome
Still, I'm prettier than he,
And right soon he'll be married —
But alas, not to me!

[*Chorus of yodling laughter,* MICKY'S *foolish bray rising above it.*]

BIDDY.

My bundle is heavy,
Like my heart full of love;
And I'm standing there helpless
Like a man at the stove.

ANNIE.

There's plenty girls like you,
As smart and as fair,
Henceforth you'll not carry
Your nose in the air.

BARBARA.

From peaks of the chamois
The night-wind blows wild;
My mother was single
And yet I'm her child.

[VERONI *rushes among them,* MICKY *gets poked in the ribs.*]

Veroni (*taking the centre of the stage, sings*).

A cross you wear proudly,
Hold pray'r-books devoutly
And strut in your Sunday best
To church with the rest.
You pretend you're so pious
And good, but you're not,
For down in your hearts
You're a wicked, bad lot.

Micky. Hehehehe!

At honest folk headed,
Your slander is dreaded;
Their honor destroying,
Their grief you're enjoying.
What's straight, you turn crooked
And care not a jot.
For you are and e'er will be
A wicked, bad lot.

[*Leaning against the well, she gives vent to her anger in tears.*]

Micky.

Yes you are and e'er will be
A wicked, bad lot.

Hehe! hehe!

[*He runs away, the girls after him, crying: "Just wait!"—"You fool, you!"—"We'll get you!" All out through the barn.*]

Scene VII

Frank *and* Foreman *enter from right as the maids run off,* Veroni *down stage.*

Foreman (*calling after the running girls*). Hallo! You! Do you hear? Has the Crossroads Farmer left? Not one of 'em will listen? They're fooling with an idiot; that's the best fun these women folks can find, because they think they are smart compared with him. If they had their way, there'd be nothing but idiots. Those they don't bring into the world themselves as Tom Noddys they like to turn into that later on, and the old women among the men folks help 'em. (*Notices* VERONI.) Just come over here, sir, here we've got the right one, she'll answer. (*They come forward,* VERONI *between them,* FRANK *toward the well.*) Has the Crossroads Farmer left?

VERONI (*wiping her eyes with the tip of her apron*). He must have just driven off.

FOREMAN (*to* FRANK). Then you'll never catch him. (*To* VERONI.) Well, what's the matter with you? Wiping your eyes? And all ready to leave too? Did things come as I told you after all? Did I mean you well or not?

VERONI. God bless you, foreman, for your honest intentions toward me.

FOREMAN. I suppose you'll go to your grandmother at Ottenschlag, hey?

VERONI. I must say I don't like to, you can imagine; but I guess I'll have to. I shan't find another place so quickly.

FOREMAN. You're right. No doubt the old woman 'll make a good deal of fuss, but she's a good soul.

FRANK (*in a shaggy Styrian coat with a knapsack and a cane, has seated himself on the bench about the well*). If I have to walk to Crossroads Farm, is there no one who could show me the way?

FOREMAN (*to* VERONI). I met the gentleman on the way; he wants to take the mountain path to the Crossroads Farm, the highway is too tiresome for him. You'll have to pass by the farm anyway and you might earn a few cents by showing him the way.

VERONI. That's all right, but I don't do it for the money, but for the love of God; you won't find me very good company, though; I'm not gay today.

FRANK. Neither am I, my good girl! If I look a little angry, do not mind it. Let us shake hands on the promise that we will not decry each other as disagreeable, until we have met again and I hope in a more happy frame of mind than today on the way to my father's farm.

VERONI (*quickly withdrawing her hand*). Your father's farm? Then you're the student they've been looking for these days, Ferner's Frank?

FRANK. Yes, my name is Frank Ferner.

VERONI. Then go your way alone. I won't take you there. Your father's a mortal enemy to me and mine. I'm still suffering from what he did to me an hour ago. I won't walk a step with his son!

FRANK (*looks in surprise at her, rises quickly*). Well, tell me; who are you?

VERONI (*turns to go*). My name is Veronica Burger.

[*Shakes hands with the foreman and goes.*]

FRANK (*takes off his hat mechanically and passes his left hand through his hair—to himself*). She! I feared it. My first step on home soil revives the past.

[*Tableau, music, drop-scene.*]

SCENE VIII

A room in the Boundary Inn at Ottenschlag. Entrance through the last wing to the left. In the background a large window (really two windows with a post between them). The hinged windows are open; wide view into an Alpine landscape. To the left from the window a large armchair; to the right, a table; on the wall above the table hangs a zither. Two tables lengthwise against the right and left wall, a tile stove just back of the door.

Old LIZZY BURGER *sits in the big armchair with her knitting; on her belt a large purse and a bunch of keys;* LEVY *sits near her at the table, his pedlar's bundle by him on the bench, before him a glass of wine and eatables wrapped in paper.*

LEVY (*puts the last bite into his mouth, wipes the table with the paper, moves his chair and looks out of the window*). It is nice, Lizzie Burger, to sit up here again with you after a long absence as unmolested as at home, and to look down on the land. Dear, dear, what a rich broad country and what poor narrow-minded people in it!

Lizzy (*a white-haired, but sturdy old woman*). Don't brag, Levy, I know you're a clever fellow, but all these years I've been wondering why you always bring your fodder along in a piece of paper, instead of being elegant and dipping in like the rest.

Levy. Well, can I risk coming to you here in the mountains without provisions? Why, you might have nothing but wet goods the day I came.

Lizzy. There you see, you're a belly-worshipper too, and you're the very one I'd have thought had more sense.

Levy. My, my; what good's all your common sense against an old law. We're brought up that way. Who'll give me a new stomach for this new food?

Lizzy. My dear Levy, your stomach's no better than other folks' heads.

Levy (*shaking his head*). May be, Lizzy Burger; may be the truth. But I must tell you, if you've been watching me for years, I've had my eyes on you for no shorter time. A clever woman you've always been, but you've never done as much thinking as now; you used to let everybody think his own thoughts and never forced your opinion on anybody. It won't do, Lizzy Burger, for your business, t'won't do at all. D' you want to make everybody think like yourself? God of my fathers!

Lizzy. Let me alone with the God of your fathers; you old codgers have only set Him up for the women folks, so they'll keep straight and won't make eyes at the younger fellows.

Levy. What did I say? Tell that to some one else who doesn't know you and he'll be insulted and won't come any more. (*Drinks.*) A pleasant mild wine. Lately I've had to get used to being nipped either by you or your wine, whereas both wine and woman used to be agreeable. My, well I remember how I'd stop in here some five years ago when your daughter was still alive and when your two grandchildren — boy and girl, fifteen, sixteen years old, a splendid young couple, used to help you. Say what's become of the two, have you never seen 'em since?

Lizzy. Oh, you know, after Veroni's death the guardian wouldn't leave me the boy any more, I was too ungodly for him, the pious man, and another pious farmer's son talked me out of the girl too.

Levy. It's a pity for the young folks. We used to have a fine time up here then. The house would be swarming with guests when I came, and I'd sit down with the farmers, then if one of 'em began to sneer at me or call me a Sheeny, whee, how you would stop his jaw. Then everybody'd laugh; I'd dig into my pocket and treat all around, peace'd be restored, glasses would clink and everything be all right again. My, but now —

Lizzy. Sure, sure, since my Veroni's dead and the young folks gone I've just got older and heavier. These blockheads around here are beginning to make trouble. I'm not agreeable to anybody any more, to myself least of all, and am living up here with just one deaf old servant.

Levy. That's why you've taken to thinking too much, and when somebody comes you like to speak your mind, but that's no good, Lizzy Burger. I don't say so on my own account, no, I'll visit you as long as the Lord keeps us two alive; but it hurts me when I drop in here and everything's so empty, and it's an event that you have a Jew for a guest.

Lizzy. Who brings his fodder along in a paper besides. No wonder I get rich!

Levy (*gravely*). Do you get rich, Lizzy Burger, tell me honestly, do you get rich on these suspicious fellows that stay here over night?

Lizzy (*in an undertone*). You mean the smugglers? They're the only customers that spend any money here. Am I to show 'em the door? They're not so bad I tell you. They're no thieves and robbers. Through all the ages valley and mountain have been all of one piece, and the boundary posts didn't grow out of the ground like the trees —. Am I to pay more because the poor devils on this side can't do the same as folks over there? Of course there's often danger when they come and say, "Mother Lizzy, hide us, they're after us!" Shall I show 'em the door just when they need shelter most? I couldn't do it. I know I'm not improving my reputation by this sort of customers, but I've been in bad repute before, a little more or less doesn't matter to me, and for the few years that are left to me I want something to live on. [Veroni *passes the window.*]

Levy (*has put money on the table and taken his bundle, now stretches out both hands to* Lizzy). And for that little speck of life you're fighting the whole world? I know, Lizzy Burger, I understand you, or I wouldn't be such a poor devil myself and a Jew besides, that have to earn my bit of bread here in this land. Good-by. [*Exit.*]

Lizzy (*calling after him*). Good luck on the way, Levy, and be sure to come back. (*Wipes the table where he has been sitting. A knock.*) Come right in, whoever's outside.

Scene IX

Lizzy, Veroni, *with a bundle under her arm, enters hesitantly.*

Veroni. How d'ye do, granny.

Lizzy (*turns in surprise*). I declare, is it you, Veroni? Well, well, have you turned up again? Why, what's this, I believe you've left your place. Where are you going to work now?

THE BROTHERS

From the Painting by Franz Defregger

PERM. [illegible]

VERONI. Haven't got a place yet.

LIZZY. Not? Did it come so quickly? I s'pose your pious farmer's son has jilted you and now the old woman without God or creed is a good friend again? Aren't you afraid to come to this God-forsaken tavern?

VERONI (*with suppressed weeping*). Good-by, granny! (*Turns.*)

LIZZY (*takes her bundle and throws it on the table*). Well, little stupid, got to cry right away? Can't your granny whet her tongue a little? You stay right here — truth won't sunburn you, or turn your skin brown! Do you think it was nice when you ran away from me? Shall I faint with joy that you're coming here now when you don't know what to do, and wouldn't have come if you knew of another place.

VERONI. I won't sponge on you long.

LIZZY. Stay here a year for all of me; that's not it. I wouldn't be near so hard on you, if I hadn't felt how much I missed you.

VERONI (*putting her arms around her*). Granny, you like me, don't you?

LIZZY. Now what are you at? You'll knock me down. (*Patting her cheeks.*) Sure, sure, you're my dear little girl. But now be sensible and stay right here. I haven't got anybody and the work's getting hard for me and it'd be comfortable to see a friendly face. (*Wipes the table.*) Sit down here. (*Patters to the cupboard and takes out a baking-dish on a tray.*) Do you want a bite to eat? (*Serving her.*) You must have started early to get to Ottenschlag at this time of day.

VERONI (*eating*). The mailman gave me a lift.

LIZZY. That's like those smarties, they'll drive for miles across the country with a young girl, so she won't hurt her feet; but an old woman like me can run along beside a wagon till her tongue's hanging out without one of 'em saying, "Old woman, want a hitch?" Well, taste good? Eating and drinking and loving that's all you young folks care about, isn't it? Right you are, there's nothing else worth while in the world.

VERONI. You still say such wicked things, you haven't changed much.

LIZZY. It wouldn't pay for the few years I've got to live.

VERONI. Granny, please don't use such language. It would be a real blessing to me if I could get you to go to church again.

LIZZY. Stupid thing, if that's the plan you came here with, then I'd rather have you leave me again. You'll never make me a Catholic. Do you think I became what I am now over night? It's taken more years than you've been in the world, and yet one night finished the process when your mother with you two children knocked at my door because that Farmer Perjury had chased her from his farm.

VERONI. You mean the Crossroads Farmer? Why do you give him that nickname, "Farmer Perjury?"

LIZZY. Is that a hard riddle? Why do you call a magpie a thief? Because that scoundrel on Crossroads Farm forswore himself, that's why I shall call him Farmer Perjury as long as he lives and longer, if I outlive him; as long as folks talk about him.

VERONI. Oh, if that was true and we could prove it.

LIZZY. It's true all right, but it can't be proved, for they simply let his perjury count as evidence for him. Your mother, who'd never lied, told the same night what had happened and stuck to it even in her last hour. Before his brother went to Vienna, Farmer Perjury knew right well what his last will was, if he should die; that everything should belong to Veroni and her two children. (*Lays her hand on* VERONI's *shoulder.*) And there was a will too. I know there was. When Farmer Perjury came home from the court where he'd lifted his hands to God and swore he didn't know anything about a document, he was burning that very paper on the hearth and his boy happened to come in. He was about twelve years old, he knew his father had been in court to take his oath about the will, and suddenly he found him holding the document in the fire. He could read all right, but he had to open his mouth, as boys like to do when they think they can stand up against their parents. My, but there was a row then on Crossroads Farm — Veroni just came in time to make out what it was all about. The farmer's old mother had to take the boy away at once, his father was so enraged at him. The boy and his grandmother went to Vienna; she grieved herself sick over the wickedness of her last remaining son and died a year ago. Those two wouldn't have said anything, and Farmer Perjury would have denied it. So it just had to stay as it was — and now you see, Veroni, when Farmer Perjury raised his hand to God just so the learned men would give him his brother's possessions, no thunderbolt came down from heaven, the earth didn't open, and my child stood there needy and disgraced and died so, and Farmer Perjury is a rich man to this day. That finished me. I don't care for a world where such things can happen. Since then they call me ungodly, but I don't believe the devils will ever fight each other for our souls. Heaven will be just as glad to get Farmer Perjury as the Devil to get one more old woman into hell.

VERONI (*laughing*). Oh, go on. (*Seriously.*) I hope to God neither of us goes to hell.

LIZZY. Well, they say it's pretty hot there; that would be all right for us old folks; I'm freezing up here anyway all the year round; but heaven will suit you all right; you've still got pretty hot blood and at present not even a sweetheart.

VERONI. Now granny, you're disgusting; it just makes me ashamed to listen to you.

Lizzy. Go on, you don't need to get so red about a little teasing. You're not a saint, and yet Saint Magdalen became one. I'm just a little gay today, because you set me off. There'll be days coming when you'll wonder how cross your granny can be. Girl, it's fine to be merry, if you could only stay so. You just stay here and I'll be that way oftener. Since I've stopped going down to the village on Sundays, they've left me alone here, even my most intimate friends have stopped coming; at best only the poor woodchoppers come in when they have lots of thirst and little money, and make a big cross before they enter. Yet that ungodly glass of wine in exchange for a few chips of wood and a "thank you kindly" tastes good to them just the same.

Veroni. And you let 'em have it?

Lizzy. Why, of course I do, and rate 'em well to boot. I'm not as bad as folks think I am, and I'm glad you had faith in me and came. You're a strong girl, they haven't been able to get at you out there in the world. I wish I'd been able to keep you two here. You wouldn't have seen anything bad here.

Veroni. Surely not. Wish myself I hadn't been so stupid and left you. Now I see what I got by it. Tell me, granny, what's 'come of my brother. Haven't you heard of him?

Lizzy. Oh, yes, they took him away from me too. Have I heard of him? O sure; more than I cared to. They took him out of this house of wickedness; Farmer Perjury has that on his conscience too. Of course he'd come from that pious school, and was too good for this place here. He knew his catechism best, knew all the sins you shouldn't do, but he also knew that sins are forgiven after confession; and so he just became a thief and a vagabond. The first time the police sent him back and the bailiff of Ottenschlag sent him to my house — I thought the earth would swallow me.

But he didn't stay long, and when he was gone my silver dollars were gone too. He kept going on in the same way, went the rounds of the jails, then was thrown on the parish again but I wouldn't have anything more to do with him, and I haven't seen him since and don't want to see him again. [JACOB *passes the window.*]

VERONI. Jesus and Joseph!

LIZZY. What's the matter?

VERONI. Why, I thought some one went by the window — he looked like Jacob.

LIZZY. I hope not.

SCENE X

LIZZY, VERONI. JACOB *in shabby clothes, sick and pale, leaning on a stick, staggers noiselessly into the room.*

LIZZY. It's himself.

VERONI. Brother — Jacob — Lord, my Saviour — how you look!

JACOB (*throws himself into the armchair and draws a deep breath*). With your permission. How d'ye do, granny! How d'ye do, Veroni! You back, too?

LIZZY. Where've you come from? What do you want here? Just out of jail again?

JACOB. For the last time, granny.

LIZZY. So you've always said, I know that from the mayor. Every time you were in prison it was the last time.

JACOB. This time it's so. I am done for. I like to have died there in the city — in the hospital. They'd have helped me to it — they're glad when one of us — accused goes off. But I dragged myself up here. Granny, let me have a place to die in — it's the last thing I'll ask of you.

LIZZY. Well, this is a red-letter day, here's brother and sister both popping — up — one's had too much life, the other too much love — but in a turn of the hand they'll both be off again, the one for some new theft, the other for a new flirtation and their old granny can stay alone in her tavern just as before, to live or to die.

Veroni (*hugging her*). Granny, I'll never leave you again.

Jacob. I wish they'd never taken me away from you. Now it's all over — I'll never get well — I wouldn't promise anything — I couldn't keep it; I know I could never do any good any more.— But give me a place to die.

Lizzy. Stuff and nonsense, I guess you aren't dying. Veroni, look after him awhile. I'm only going over to my little field on the heights where Nick's working; he must run to the village for the barber.

[*Exit quickly.*]

Veroni. Jacob, tell the truth I beg of you. Are you really so bad, or —

Jacob. I know you think, "once a liar" — just wait, I may not last till morning. You'll see — that I'm speaking the truth. Granny's the last one I'd deceive. She's the only one in the world except you, that's meant well by me. (*Short pause.*) Veroni, I'm so glad I could see you before my death. Though talking's getting hard for me — I just crawled up here — got something to tell you — got something for you.

Veroni. I beg you — one thing — brother — is it stolen property?

Jacob (*wipes his face*). O holy Jesus, Veroni! Don't torment me in my last hour! What I've got for you is mine before God and the law. You know when father went to Vienna, I went along, only a boy — he sent a letter home, I s'pose his will — a few days later he had to go to the hospital and soon died there, but before he went, we stayed with aunt, and she kept the belongings father left with her, and she told me, "Jakey, I'll keep these things for you." But later on I never dared to go to her, because I'd become such a scoundrel. Only this last time, when I'd got lower down than ever before, I went to her — a fellow in my condition hasn't got much use for bashfulness any more. The good woman had really kept father's few things all this time. The clothes I sold to pay my way here. But father's prayer book I wanted to give to you or granny — it'll be a memento of him. (*Draws out a book in a red cloth and unwraps it.*) You take it.

VERONI. I thank you very much, Jacob. (*As she thoughtfully drops her hands the leaves of the book open.*) Why, here's a letter in it!

JACOB. I know it — found it so — a letter to father about that time.

VERONI. What's in it?

JACOB. I don't know — never read it — it only concerned father, anyway. What could be in it to help or hurt me now? Even now it's hard for me to read handwriting — wouldn't care to undertake it. — Simply wanted to get up here.

VERONI. The seal almost crackled off this long time. I'll open it.

JACOB. Do it, it's yours now.

VERONI (*opening the letter*). It's from father's brother, the Crossroads Farmer! Great God!

JACOB. But you give a man a start!

VERONI. For goodness sake, brother, listen, just listen to what he wrote to father: "Dear Jacob, your will, in which you make Veroni and her two children heirs of all your possessions, I have received. It is not handsome of you to leave so little to me and my children. . . ."

JACOB (*starting up*). Jesus, Mary, does it say that? — And that would have been the proof! (*Holds his head in his hands.*) Veroni — this finishes me; I'm getting dizzy. I wouldn't have gone to the bad if I hadn't seen how the Crossroads Farmer was rich and respected through it all — my whole life full of want and shame — and absolutely unnecessary — just this little scrap of paper — Jesus and Joseph, what a silly world this is! (*Lowers his head and gropes aimlessly.*) Veroni! Veroni!

Veroni. Brother, for heaven's sake, keep your senses! You mustn't die now. Think our letter, wait, granny'll be right back with the barber.

Jacob. Too late, it's all too late! — I'm only glad of one thing; that you and granny can still have better days — and that I got home in time. (*Looks out of the window.*)

Veroni. Do you feel better?

Jacob. I don't know. Listen, Veroni.

Veroni. What is it?

Jacob (*pointing to the zither*). Could you? — Would you? —

Veroni. You want me to play the zither for you?

Jacob (*nodding. And then — in the melody of the following song*). This is my last desire.

Veroni. That song you want me to sing for you? (Jacob *nods.*)

Veroni. I can't, Jacob, I can't.

Jacob (*smiling and continuing as above*). Grant me my prayer.

Veroni. I can't refuse you anything, but it's hard — O God, how hard!

[*She sets the zither before her on the table.* Jacob *folds his hands.*]

Veroni (*though she begins with a broken voice, she gradually gains control of herself and then continues with the sharp enunciation of the peasant songs*).

This is my last desire,
Grant me my prayer,
Lord, I am going home,
Let me die there!

Forest green, mountains blue,
Dark lake below:
Fain would I see you all
Before I go.

Fain in my father's house
I'd sink to rest,
Laying my dying head
On Mother's breast.

[Lizzy *enters.*]

JACOB (*turning*). Granny, Granny.

[LIZZY *hastens to him, he lays his head on her breast.*]

Laying my dying head
On Mother's breast.

My eyes her loving hand
Will close, I know,
Farewell, my native land
To rest I go.

[VERONI, *sobbing aloud, hides her face* — JACOB *dies* — LIZZY, *however, is bending over him and thus conceals his last agony from the audience. Meanwhile the orchestra finishes the refrain. Curtain.*]

ACT II

Living room at FERNER'S, *comfortably furnished. Sacred images on the walls. Through the open door at centre the front room is visible. Above the door, before a picture of the Madonna with a tin heart, a burning lamp with a red globe. Two windows to the right, by the first or second wing stands a table with chairs. On the left side two chairs (a jacket on one). A wardrobe, a hat on top. By the door, a bowl of holy water.*

SCENE I

FERNER, *in a comfortable house-coat, and* HELLERER *sit at the table, the latter with his back to the window. Both are smoking, mugs and sandwiches are on the table. Later* CRESCENCE.

HELLERER. The day's nearly over. Your son probably won't come today, or he'd be here by now. It's no use to wait, and I don't like to get home late. Where's Toni?

FERNER. Probably gone with Crescence to look around the farm. He's got a good guide, she knows about it. (*Looks out of the window.*) He can't be far, for I see Crescence over there talking to the forewoman.

HELLERER. Call her in.

FERNER. She'll be here right away. (*Rises and calls from the second window*). Crescence! Hallo! Come in!

CRESCENCE (*outside*). Right away, father.

FERNER (*closing the window*). Of course, right away. (*Back to table.*)

HELLERER. Your cattle and household are known far and wide. How about your crops? Are you satisfied?

FERNER. Oh, to be sure, thank the Lord! It's a fine year.

HELLERER. I'll be satisfied too, if we can get everything in as it is on the field.

CRESCENCE (*entering*). Here I am — what do you want, father?

HELLERER (*pointing to* FERNER). That father doesn't want anything, but this father asks you: What have you been doing to my boy, girl, so's not to bring him with you? Have you lost him, or did you pawn him?

CRESCENCE. If he is lost, you had better let the town crier announce it, I'm not looking for him, but if he is pawned I wouldn't redeem him.

FERNER. Well, I hope you didn't begin to quarrel the very first day?

CRESCENCE. We did, though; why, he acts just as if he was doing me a favor by going with me; but I told him right off that I was Crescence with the bags of hard cash, and not Veroni with the bundle of rags.

HELLERER. By gracious, you needn't have done that. He's got money-bags, too.

FERNER. You mustn't be so stand-offish with Toni. The girl likes the boy, and I'll bet she only mentioned her dollars because the affair with Veroni vexed her.

HELLERER. You may be right. A woman in love is forever talking about her dollars and really means the ass that marries her for 'em. Damn it! Where did the young rowdy go to?

CRESCENCE. He ran away from me.

HELLERER. Home, perhaps?

CRESCENCE. No, in the opposite direction.

HELLERER. The devil, where to?

CRESCENCE. How should I know? Perhaps to Ottenschlag after that girl, Veroni.

HELLERER. Well, there's no good in that.

CRESCENCE. He said he knew where they like him better.

HELLERER. Just let him come home tonight, my lad. I never liked that tomfoolery—thought it was all over, and now!—You might have held him from the start, so he'd forget her.

CRESCENCE. Let him have her.

HELLERER. Don't act so. That wouldn't suit any of us, you least of all.

CRESCENCE. If that's the way he is—

FERNER. Be quiet, girl. And you, cousin, tell Toni not to play the fool, or nothing can come of it.

HELLERER (*rising*). Do you care so little? I see you just want him to be your fool, and then indeed something will come of it—for you.

FERNER. Cousin!

HELLERER. Oh bosh, cousin this and cousin that. Didn't you throw the girl at him?

FERNER. I, throw her at him?

HELLERER. Well? Didn't you?

SCENE II

FERNER, HELLERER, CRESCENCE. FRANK *has come through the front room and now stands in the door.*

FRANK. Good evening all!

FERNER. You know I can keep her, too.

HELLERER. Well, then keep her, keep her.

FERNER. There's enough after her.

HELLERER (*takes his hat*). But none that has an Adam Farm next to yours.

FRANK (*drowns the quarreling voices*). Hallo! Hey! Will you never stop quarreling! Shall I wait forever at the door? Who is the master of this house?

FERNER. I!

Frank. Glad to hear it. I am Frank Ferner.

Ferner. You, sir?—Is it you, Franky? (*He stares at him, walks hesitantly toward him, and holds out his hand*). The Lord bless your coming in and your going out of this house.

Hellerer. Amen!

Ferner. It's good you've come. . . .

Frank (*pointing to* Crescence). Is that my sister?

Ferner. Yes, that's Crescence.

Frank (*pointing to* Hellerer). And your guest?

Hellerer (*shakes hands with him*). The owner of Adam Farm, young man.

Ferner. We're kin by marriage. . . .

Hellerer (*shaking his hand*). Of course, of course! Thunder and lightning! And one heart and one soul!

Ferner. His son's to marry our girl. Crescence, do hurry up and say something when your brother comes home.

Crescence. How do you do, sir,—do you like it here?

Ferner. Stupid thing, can't you talk like a real sister to your brother?

Crescence. Why no, I just can't do it. I've got to get used to him first, for I never thought he'd look like that—he looks like those city gentlemen that come out here hunting, and yet he's a student and I thought students were supposed to wear black only, like clergymen, and I should think the clerical dress would look so well on my brother.

Ferner. Ssh, Girl! Don't let your tongue run away with you!

Hellerer. Especially not in church matters!

Crescence. Well, I just couldn't hold it back because this gaudy worldly dress is simply not proper for him in this pious house. The whole neighborhood calls it that and father almost passes for a saint.

Frank (*ironically*). Is that so?

Ferner. You mustn't talk so, we're all sinners.

HELLERER. She's shocked at her own brother because he doesn't wear black. He, he! Foolish girl, I wonder what'll come next! (*Softly to* FERNER.) Now I know what you want, I know — that girl certainly gives your hand away; well, just play your cards well, and everything shall stay as before. (*Aloud.*) Come, Crescence, you can show me the farm, too. Most likely your father wants to have a talk with his son alone.

FERNER. Yes, indeed! Run along.

HELLERER. If you need us — we'll be right back. Meanwhile, good-by.

CRESCENCE. Good-by, brother. Take father's words to heart.

HELLERER. That's right! To listen to your father is no disgrace, even if you do come from the city.

[*Both off.*]

FRANK. Good-by, shrewd sister; your servant, wise Adam Farmer.

SCENE III

FERNER *closes the door.* FRANK, *standing in the centre front, draws figures on the floor with his cane and whistles aimlessly.* FERNER *comes back to the table. At first he speaks without looking at* FRANK.

FERNER. Don't you want to sit down, Frank?

FRANK (*does so*). H'm, yes. I'm good and tired, for I walked across the mountains and could not find my way among the paths for a long time.

FERNER. You had good weather so far?

FRANK. Fairly.

FERNER. It'll stay this way for awhile. I s'pose you're not sorry you're here? The walks round here are fine.

FRANK. Yes, it's a beautiful country!

FERNER. Have a glass? (*Fills the glass.*) Help yourself.

FRANK (*gulps it down*). Thanks.

FERNER. You know how! (*Fills the glass.*) Have another!

FRANK. That was just to take the edge off my thirst. I never keep it up that tempo.

Ferner (*filling his own glass*). I follow suit. (*Drinks.*) Honestly, Frank, it's hard to talk to you, we're really like strangers to each other, and yet we're father and son. Go and take off your things, won't you, you're at home here.

Frank. Thanks, it isn't necessary! I may soon have cause to leave again.

Ferner (*staring at him*). What do you say?

Frank. Tell me frankly, what is your plan for me.

Ferner. I'll come to that all right, Franky! Aye, I'll get to it, but first let me get a good look at you. I haven't seen you since you were so high. (*Gesture.*) I can hardly believe that I'm the father of such a big boy, and how handsome you've grown! I hope the city hasn't spoiled you?

Frank (*significantly*). Not the city.

Ferner. Come, just have one more drink. Tell me, have you any affection for your folks? Do you like your sister?

Frank. Strange question! Did you not say yourself that we are like strangers to each other. . . .

Ferner. Well, you see what I mean is that brother and sister usually like each other, and especially an unmarried fellow that has no sweetheart usually thinks a lot of his sister. She's a mighty sweet girl, Crescence is. Let me tell you, she'll make a good match, if she gets Toni of Adam Farm.

Frank. I hope she may, with all my heart.

Ferner. Now that's right, here's to you. (*Clinks glasses with* Frank *and drinks.*) You hope she may, with all your heart, is what a brother should say. You're a good lad! — But you must do your share to make her perfectly contented and happy.

Frank (*slowly and ironically*). Is — that — so — ?

Ferner. Yes, indeed, Franky. But we won't let folks make fun of us, hey, Franky? We're right there when it's necessary to show folks that the Ferners stick together on Crossroads Farm, and that we're going to make our Crescence the show piece of the land. You know, the old Adam Farmer — you just met him — is a schemer; his farm's the biggest in the country next to mine and adjoins it, and he can't help thinking, if the two farms come together, what a fine stretch of land it would be; that's always been my idea too! So we agreed that he give Toni his farm, and I'd give Crescence mine, and so start out the young folks on the biggest piece of land in the country. They'll have plenty of room when the family increases, hey, don't you think so? So that's the way we've settled it between us, and how do you feel about it? We wanted to get your opinion too, and that's why I sent for you!

Frank. How neatly you paw at the hot porridge — and now you expect me to blow on it for you so you need not burn your tongue; if you are in such a hurry for the first spoonful, I will set the whole dish in the cold right away: help yourself! The two farms shall be joined, but in a way that suits me too. Hasn't the old Adam Farmer a marriageable daughter?

Ferner. Yes,— there is one, Polly.

Frank. Well, then give her Adam Farm and I will marry her.

Ferner. You? Ha, ha! You, Franky? Listen, you're a capital fellow. You can crack jokes, that's true! Ha, ha, Toni would say, no, thanks. Where'd he come in?

Frank. Put that fellow into a cowl!

Ferner (*significantly*). But Franky, he hasn't had any schooling.

Frank. But I have.

Ferner (*somewhat confused, but immediately regaining self-control*). Yes, you *have* had schooling; yes, and I'm proud of it; and now we've touched on that point, let me tell you it was the wish of your grandmother and your mother — God bless 'em both — and it'd be my greatest pride and my greatest joy if you'd only turn priest.

FRANK (*rising*). Well now, here we come to the point. Why didn't you say that to start with? It was needless trouble to ask about my feeling for the family and my brotherly love; it was needless trouble to explain your economic plans and considerations, and finally it was needless trouble to show me that you'd rather give both the bird in your hand and any birds you can get out of the bush to your daughter, who thinks you almost a saint, than to me who know you as a downright sinner. Considering all I know, there is no good in letting me see such things.

FERNER (*rises, appeasingly*). Frank, listen to me . . .!

FRANK. Crossroads Farmer — if you had told me your heart's desire openly, I should have listened calmly and said " no " just as calmly; but now that you are trying subterfuges on me, I'm just going to tell you this: up to now, nature has kept in my soul the seal of the confessional on your crime — after all, I am your child, and I did not wish to furnish the world the spectacle of a son accusing his own father — but be careful! You have no longer before you the boy of the past, but the accessory who can talk or keep silent, as he finds it useful or serviceable. Nothing, I tell you, can induce me to apply the toil of my studies to the most self-sacrificing and poorly paid profession there is into which you impress your sons without their feeling a divine call or consecration, and thus take them from their families and their country only to see them haunting the poverty-stricken parishes of their native land as that which they are not made to become, but to remain — farmers, only dressed in cassocks!

FERNER. Frank, Frank, let me speak! All this time I've never been able to confide in any one what nobody in the world knows but you and me and our Lord above — you understand, Frank, what a load that is. It's like a millstone round my neck, and I often think I'll go mad 'o nights, when I remember how often I've taken communion without ever confessing a word of it. Frank, you're the only person in the world that knows about it without my having to tell him — you're the only one who can absolve me without any formalities, who can one day bless away my sin in my last extremity! Frank, Frank, don't forsake your father!

Frank (*freeing himself from his clutch*). I believe you are already out of your mind, but there is method in your madness, and your means are drastic. You would get rid of your sins and I of my inheritance in the simplest way and then Cenzi could have Toni, and spiritual and material advantage would go hand in hand as nice as you please! If you are already seeking absolution,— why from your accomplice, why not from the unspotted? Why don't you have Crescence become a nun and pray for both of us? According to your argument, the intercession of the pure must count for more with heaven!

Ferner. Cenzi! — Cenzi? The poor girl doesn't know a thing about it! Is she to suffer for it?

Frank. So you haven't the courage to appear before her, who knows nothing about it, as the man you are. You do not wish her almost sainted father's stock to take a slump in her soul, you want to remain pious in the eyes of this inexperienced young creature. But you are so "pious" that you are planning to make retribution for the first sin by a second one; and because you know only too well that no priest to whom his office is sacred would leave your unrighteous possessions in your hands, therefore you are trying to deceive heaven itself by manufacturing for your own private use an accommodating priest who will absolve you on his own responsibility. That's what you want — ! However, the question is not what you want, but what I want or don't want!

Ferner (*draws himself up and blows audibly*). What! So dictatorial! Well, finish what you've to say.

Frank. What I want, I will tell you now in two words: This farm has cost me sacrifices enough, its illegal acquisition has poisoned all my childhood, the fearful anxiety of years of knowledge about your crime has made me unsociable and friendless, and you have no right to demand of me the additional sacrifice that would snatch from me the reward of all my former ones — I am going to be master here!

Ferner (*sullenly*). You, master? Right — quite right — you are to squander and ruin the whole farm! —

Frank. No danger of that, never fear it! I obeyed your call and came home because I thought you perhaps wished to retire and turn over the work to younger and more powerful arms; it would have been well done, you could have depended upon that; for I must confess that I am by no means in a position to act as your intercessor with heaven, for I have not learned to talk Latin with our Lord God, but only German with you and other folks. What else I have learned, and whether I am fit to be a landowner, you can find out at the Agricultural School.

Ferner (*quite stunned*). Then you haven't been studying?

Frank. Not Latin.

Ferner (*rushes at him*). You scoundrel, you! That's the way you cheat your father out of his money and his last hope for peaceful death.

Frank (*forces him down into the chair*). That worked eight years ago, but never lay a hand on me again.— Besides, it was your own mother, who has been resting in the cool earth this year past,— who deceived you to make her grandson happy — I bless her memory for it.

Ferner (*has dropped his head and passes his trembling hands through his hair*). No, no — I won't touch you — guess, you'll have to wait to be master here, aye, to wait, so long's I live (*looking up*) — and I'll support you no more — and on my deathbed — on my deathbed — I'll curse you yet!

Frank (*crying out*). Crossroads Farmer! (*Sternly.*) Think twice before you speak of cursing or blessing. You cannot make God your attorney after you have degraded Him to the place of a false witness.

Ferner (*collapses utterly*). Jesus! Mary! This is how my own flesh and blood talks to me!

Frank. You do not do well, Crossroads Farmer, to remind me at this moment of what I should be to you, for then I have to remember also what you have been to me from my childhood to this day. Do you realize, I wonder, what you have destroyed in me for all time? Family — friendship — love! All that is a fable to me. Family-life has been dead for me since my childhood, and you know the day it died. Friendship! Where could I find a friend with the burden of our secret on my heart? Always anxiously shrouding, anxiously concealing that one thought like an ugly sore on my body, I could not enjoy him! yet if I spoke, he would either turn from me in abhorrence, or the friend would turn into a traitor. And that fairest dream of life — love! I seek it as my absolution, as you seek yours! I seek a wife to whom I also need not confess what weighs on my soul, and who would know all the curse of my past and the terrifying anguish of the present, but who could love me faithfully in spite of all. I seek in vain, I know, and nothing is left me, if my life is not to be an utter bankruptcy, but to watch and see that I at least do not lose the price of my silence. You cannot complain, Farmer, that I am overreaching you; for I have lost the self that nature endowed with a cheerful disposition to spurn the ground exuberantly beneath his feet, and to look up boldly and unquestioningly into the blue sky and you can well believe that I would not have exchanged that for your farm.

FERNER (*trembling, seizes* FRANK *with both hands and presses him down into the chair beside him*). Frank, Frank, you must listen to me! You must hear my side, before you condemn me. Let me tell you what's been on my heart all these years. I didn't mean to do wrong. The Lord in Heaven is my witness that I didn't mean to do wrong. To be sure it hurt me when my brother said he was going to leave everything to his mistress and her children, but I thought, if that's the way it's to be, that ends it. Then my brother, and a sick man he was, went off with his boy Jacob to Vienna, and Veroni Burger put on great airs on the farm as if she already owned it; she knew how bad it made us feel and she let us know it. Then my brother's will came from the city, and I put it quietly in the drawer and thought he'd soon come back, and wrote him that I'd got the will; but I didn't say a mortal word to anybody, so no one could tell Veroni; for she'd have tormented us more than ever. All at once comes the notice of my brother's death to the house. I simply can't describe to any human being how I felt, for Veroni was sure enough on top now, and when I looked at my wife and you two children and thought how my father's rich estate was to go into strangers' hands, it just tightened on my heart like a noose. Time and again I thought to myself: Take the will to probate now, God will help you,— and at night when I couldn't sleep I'd get up and I'd take it calmly out of the drawer and get it ready for the next day — but then when one of you'd draw a deep breath in the stillness of the night, sleeping so peacefully, and I'd look over at my wife and your two little beds, my hand would tremble and I'd put the paper back into the drawer, and think: Must I tell 'em so soon that they've got to leave father's house and face a hard life? Why, there's time enough, leave 'em in peace as long as possible! And so the will lay for

BEGGAR MUSICIANS

From the Painting by Franz Defregger

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weeks in my drawer. Then Veroni got tired of waiting and she went to court; and when I met her at the first hearing and she laughed so scornful as if it was bound to go her way now, and when the judge yelled at me in such a lordly way — as if I was the biggest rogue in the world — where was the will? — the thought came to me: What is there to it, what have I done that he should yell at me so? I got mad and said there was no use taking this to court, even if there was a will. Then the judge shouted, " Well, isn't there one? " that's when I began to get the idea whether I couldn't say there wasn't any. I was wrathy and began to quarrel with Veroni and we got so excited the judge had both of us taken out. I came home with my dander up, not yet knowing what was to come of it, and lifted my hands to our Lord to ask Him for a sign to tell me whether He wouldn't forgive me if I suppressed the will for the sake of my children and on account of the sinful life Veroni had led with my brother. Don't forget, Frank, I was anxious all the time about the letter I'd written to my brother, because it hadn't been returned to me, for fear it might have got into the wrong hands. But when the letter never appeared, as if the dead man had taken it with him into his grave — you see, Frank, I took that as the first sign, and from that time on, I said there wasn't any will. Then the suit went on and I had to swear to my statement. If there only hadn't been that, Frank, if there only hadn't been any oath! You can't imagine how I felt. Why, it was too late now to say: there is a will! It wasn't only that I'd have lost everything, but they'd have put me into jail into the bargain, and meanwhile you wouldn't have had any father and perhaps no bread — only misery and disgrace! So the day I was to swear I went to church very early and lifted my hands to heaven again and asked our Lord to give me another sign, and as the time was already approaching for me to start for the county seat, and nothing had happened yet — all of a sudden something touched my knees, and I looked up and little Crescence stood before me, sent by her mother to tell me not to be late — there she stood before me in her little white dress, her hair braided around her head, just like an angel from heaven, and said: "Daddy, go swear now." Then I calmly got up, thanked heaven for its mercy and vowed I'd take the sin on myself for the children's sake. I went to the county seat and walked bolt upright into the court room; only when I stood before the crucifix with the lighted candles, all at once my right hand felt as heavy as lead, as if I couldn't raise it. Then God sent me the thought: you needn't swear there isn't any will, but only swear you haven't got it. That braced me up, for the paper really was lying miles away in my drawer. So I was able to repeat the oath clearly and distinctly and everything was all right. You can imagine when I had come home and was burning the document in the back kitchen and all at once you stood there watching me — I wasn't responsible for what I did then, Frank, I really wasn't responsible! I felt as if God was after all withdrawing His hand from me! — I was almost despondent.

[*Short pause.*]

But later when God's blessing rested through all the years on house and field, it dawned on me that the Lord had intrusted the farm to me only as an overseer, and had at the same time decided which of you was to have it. Now you know how it came. (*Timidly.*) I don't know how it is, Frank, but just as on the day when you suddenly stood before me, I feel now a terrible fear, so that I could wish the earth would swallow me up; just as you interfered then, so you do today, and it seems as if the affair would never end! Now I don't know what's to be done — Great God! May our Lord be with us both! (*Rests his head on his hands.*)

Frank (*rises and puts his hand on his shoulder*). Old man, we should both be happier if you had been all your life less what you call pious, but always honest.

[*Leaves him, goes to the right.*]

Scene IV

Short knock. The same. Veroni *going quickly forward to the centre of the stage.*

Veroni. Good evening.

Frank (*rousing his father*). Father!

Ferner (*lifts his head from his hands*). Who is it? You?

Veroni. Good evening to you both. (*To* Frank, *who starts to go.*) Don't go — you can hear what I have to say to Matthias Ferner.

Ferner (*gets up and walks toward her entirely himself again*). You want to talk to me, you saucy thing? I guess it isn't so important and can wait till some other time. I surely don't feel like talking to you today! But when you do come here, don't come into the room as if you'd dropped from Heaven, and if you knock at the door, then wait till somebody says "Come in." And then I want to tell you that I'm master of house and home here, and for you I'm not Matthias Ferner, but Crossroads Farmer, you bear that in mind, and when you come again, show better manners, and now you go!

Veroni. But it just suits me today, and so you needn't be so mad about my bad manners, for that's the way I am — into this room here I expect to come a good many times without knocking, after this, and if I call you Matthias Ferner, that's your rightful name, I expect, though I wouldn't swear that folks'll call you that much longer, for perhaps in a few weeks everybody'll be calling you what my granny in Ottenschlag has called you these years,— "Farmer Perjury."

Ferner (*flaring up*). One more such word, girl. . . . ! (*Checks himself and shrugs his shoulders.*) The old woman at Ottenschlag is daffy and now she's made you crazy, too, I suppose?

Veroni. Granny doesn't know yet what I know — and I've never had my mind in better control than today. This morning on Adam Farm I told you I wouldn't have waited till today if I knew positively about your sin — but that I hoped I could prove it yet — but probably neither of us expected what I can tell you tonight: I can prove it and I won't wait, either — I won't wait; we must have our rights at once for that poor old woman up there at Ottenschlag hasn't much more time to wait. I won't wait, for folks can never hear the truth too soon, and I think *that* lie has lived long enough.— But as an honest enemy I've come to tell you to your face that the truce between us is over, and what you can expect. The next sunrise will see me on the way to the county seat. I'm going to live here on Crossroads Farm, that's ours by divine and human law according to my father's last will, and you shall travel the same road to want and shame that you sent my mother on eight years ago. Only you needn't be surprised if your road leads off "Honesty Road" to the penitentiary!

Ferner. You slanderer! (*Reaches for a chair, trembling with excitement*). If you value your bones, you'd better get out! — Behind my back you can make all the plans you want, for all of me, rake up the old lawsuit again, if you've got any money to throw away.— Justice will prevail, and there's no more proving your case now than there was then. But in my house and to my face you'd better not go too far, so you keep that in mind and get out of my sight, or you may meet with an accident.

Veroni. All right, I won't trouble you any longer; but it's not very becoming for you to get on your high horse and talk big about justice and evidence, when there's some one standing right beside you in this room who saw with his own eyes where that will went to.

FERNER (*shrugs his shoulders, pityingly*). Talk, idle talk—what do you know about it? Gossip! (*Pointing to* FRANK.) May be you count on him or think he's come here just in time to be your witness?

FRANK. You surely must know that nobody could force me to testify against my own father.

VERONI. I know it and I wouldn't have asked it of you, but I've got a better witness than you; I've got your father himself—this time you don't swear against a poor woman and two little orphans—this time it's against your own words in your own handwriting! Farmer Perjury, I've got the letter you wrote to my father when he was in the hospital!

FERNER (*looking at her with glassy eyes*). This isn't—that can't be!

VERONI. But it is so! This letter strikes home! and what you wrote then: "Dear Jacob, it isn't handsome of you to leave so little to me and my children" agrees very well with what happened afterward.

FRANK. Miserable man. Now your first sign turns against you!

[FERNER *staggers back to a chair, into which he sinks down powerless, folding his hands.*]

VERONI (*nears him*). Farmer Perjury, now that's the way I like to see you. Why swagger, now that we two know how we stand? You can imagine how I've waited and waited for this hour, year after year; and that's why I knew you wouldn't spoil it for me when it came, knew you'd get smaller and smaller, as small as you used to make folks think you were big! That's the way I wanted to see you, but all by myself first, before other folks saw you—this is the way I wanted to have you alone before me, face to face! Not a word have you to say, and how plain I can read on your forehead:

"You haven't done me wrong, no, I'm a monstrous villain." That's what I came for, and now good night to you both! [*Turns and goes to the door.*]

FRANK. Veroni!

VERONI. Do you want something of me?

FRANK. Let me put in a word with you for the old man, wait a little — think it over — do not go too fast!

VERONI (*sternly*). Frank Ferner! Up yonder in the death chamber at Ottenschlag my brother is lying, at this moment, on a shutter, after a miserable life as an outcast. I know from his last words that he wouldn't have lived such a life if that old man had been different. Don't beg for him.

FRANK. Do I speak for him alone? Veroni, does it not strike me too?

VERONI. Poor fellow, I know you're not to blame and how hard it is to bear other folks' sins. But I can't help you; the old account must be settled first; when there's nothing more chalked up against you then come and speak for yourself. (*Holds out both hands.*) Good-by!

SCENE V

Shallow stage, VERONI'S *little room at Ottenschlag. To the left a door. In the rear to the right a bed, to the left of it a window affording a view of the mountains which are seen in the following setting. In front to the left a table. The stage is dark when the curtain rises.*

VERONI, *dressed as in the previous scene, enters from the left with a candle; the stage lights up, sings*

A lass by her window,
Is sitting at night,
Seeks news of her sweetheart
From the stars shining bright.
She asks how he's faring,
And if he is true,
Just as other lovers
Talk foolishness too.

Don't lift up your glances
To the stars way up there;
Though you're weeping or laughing,
The stars do not care.
They're much too far distant
From this earthly place;
Two stars that will answer
Are in your love's face.

But I would advise you
To look to the skies
Than gaze all too deeply
Into those dear eyes.
Those stars and their speaking,
Don't always believe,
You'll find it quite easy
Yourself to deceive.

(*Yodling.*)

(*Removes the kerchief from her head, takes off her jacket.*) Whoever invented that song must surely have known that love's the biggest cheat in the world just the same.

Scene VI

Veroni. Toni *appears and leans in at the window.*

Toni. How do you do, Veroni?

Veroni (*starts, turns to the window*). Toni! Great heavens, how you frightened me! What do you want here! I can't understand how you dare to come here to me.

Toni. I've been waiting for you ever since sundown. You left me in anger this morning; I don't like that. You must listen to me. (*Lifts one foot over the window.*)

Veroni. You keep out! I haven't anything to say to you or to hear from you. It's all over between us, and the most sensible thing we can do is to keep away from each other.

Toni. You couldn't be so indifferent if you'd ever liked me the least bit.

Veroni. I'd like to know why you should find fault with me; you wouldn't let 'em fling another girl at your head if you'd honestly loved me.

Toni. Look here, I have to obey my father.

Veroni. Very well, I don't object and I'm not jealous of any girl who gets you. I don't begrudge you to any girl and all I ask is that you go away now and leave me alone in the future.

Toni. That means that I'm no more to you than the Jew you'd spit on.

Veroni. Not at all, I don't spit at Jews.

Toni. Then I'm even worse than a Jew to you. A nice way to talk! As I say, you wouldn't talk that way if you'd really loved me.

Veroni. You keep harping on that, like a cat rubbing against an old woman's dress. Mighty becoming to you. I 'spose you're surprised that I haven't torn my hair because of this? Well, you didn't have fits either, when they said you'd have to take Crescence.

Toni (*coming forward*). See here, Veroni, that affair with Crescence isn't stamped and sealed yet — who knows but it may come to nothing. Just let me tell you, Crescence is no sort of a girl, you couldn't imagine how sulky she gets and how high and mighty, for you could never be like that. Compared with you, she loses at every point; my goodness, Crescence is a poor orphan compared to you.

Veroni. Don't think I'm as stupid as some other women folks, three or four of 'em often running after one fellow; — just so long as he tells each one how bad and worthless the others are; and often the whole fellow isn't worth as much as one of the girls, although they aren't of the best themselves.

Toni. Do you think I'm like the fellows you mean that go with several women? What do I care for all other women, all I'm worried about is losing you. If Crescence got sulky and wouldn't take me after all, I'd have had my trouble for nothing. And if I should have to take her as those two old blockheads have decided — and you know you can't argue with either of 'em — and was never to see you again, I'd have mighty little joy in the world, for I'm used to having you for my sweetheart. Couldn't you keep on that way? We just have to make the best of it. Your mother did the same with the Crossroads Farmer.

Veroni. He wasn't married.

Toni. Yes, but he always had two or three on the string. We all do the best we can in this world, so we do; and folks wouldn't say anything about you except that you're your parents' child and can't disown their hot blood.

Veroni (*with a superior air*). Well, if I do have my ideas from my parents — and if they had hot blood ten times over — they must have been unusual folks that only mixed with good people, for I'm just thinking that I'm glad to get rid of a scamp like you without any trouble. I was a foolish young thing when I met you; I liked you, for in those years a young girl loves easily and thinks anything that looks like a man must be one. And you did promise everything good and lovely and noble because my good looks took you, and not a single boy in the parish blamed you, I'll wager. But if you'd been the least bit of a man you might have told me honestly, "It's all over." Though my heart would have been heavy at first, I wouldn't have spoiled your wedding day for you, and by that time both heart and feet would have surely got lighter again and I'd have thought it just wasn't to be, but I'd have always regarded you as an honest man, though an unfaithful lover. But as it is, you neither kept your word nor took it back, but played a game behind both our backs that could only insult a self-respecting woman. The rich farmer girl, ah, she suited you all right, and you thought the poor homeless girl who'd been going with you so long could do nothing but keep trudging along the road that suited you. No, you rascal, that's not the way! If I felt like it I could tell you something very different, such as how I'll go treasure digging tomorrow, or about changelings that were exchanged in the cradle you know and later suddenly change back, and one does what the other was to have done, or about how a lad can easily make a mistake — thinks he's got the rich farmer's daughter, but in the meantime she gets poor, and by jilting the supposed poor girl, which he thinks is very smart, he really turns down the rich girl. But that same poor girl that you talked into leaving her granny so you'd find it easy to lead her around by the nose for years, she's grown older in course of time and in spite of the fact that she was always with you, she's come to have more sense too. Now I'm free again another must come, a real man, to get a "Yes" from me. There, now we've talked it out with each other and it's over and done with; and now march out the way you came in!

Toni (*retreating a little*). My, but you know how to say your say. (*A short pause.*) Say, Veroni — Listen!

Veroni (*impatiently.*) I'm done.

Toni (*nears her*). I know something.

Veroni. If you won't start —

Toni. Act as wild as you like — but I know that till that real man comes — you'd rather have — the boy on the spot!

Veroni (*pushing him back*). Puppy! This is the end!

Scene VII

Frank (*swings himself quickly through the window*). Veroni!

TONI (*rubs his side*). What do you want? Don't you meddle here. We'll be reconciled in another minute — you get out of here.

FRANK (*comes forward*). You are not alone? I must talk to you!

VERONI (*sharply*). I don't know what about.—And at this hour. Are you like the rest, and because I was good enough to give you an inch today you want to take an ell? Silly goose, that I am, I should have known that on summer nights you can't leave your windows open without letting in any good-for-nothing fly-by-night from all directions.

TONI. Does this gentleman know who I am?

FRANK. No, and it does not interest me!

TONI (*proudly*). I'm the son of the Adam Farmer.

FRANK. Glad to know you, I am the son of the Crossroads Farmer.

TONI (*frightened*). Good Lord, brother-in-law to be — say, no harm intended, but don't let either of our two old men know you met me here.

FRANK. No, but one good turn deserves another — come here! (*Pointing to the window sill.*) Jump, Fido!

TONI. You mustn't tattle.

FRANK (*stamping impatiently.*) No, no! But jump, I say!

TONI. Good night! (*Climbs out.*)

FRANK. Go and be hanged.

SCENE VIII

VERONI. FRANK.

VERONI (*speaking at first with the utmost harshness*). Well, if you hadn't interfered I'd have that fellow out myself, and given him the surprise of his life. Now have I got to wait for a third fellow to come along and say "jump" to you, before I can get rid of you?

FRANK (*seriously*). The third will not fail you.

VERONI. I wouldn't like that; why, it would take till tomorrow morning. Get out, it's time for me to sleep.

Frank. Listen to me, Veroni. I know you are indignant at my bursting into your room now. I merely came to do you a service; whether you think much or little of it, I consider it my duty. And when I warn you and say that I am here to protect you — I am honestly taking no greater liberty than your watch-dog.

Veroni. It isn't necessary. We've got two such beasts in the house, and if your new comrades got wind of you, they wouldn't leave much of you.

Frank. But first you must know what is at stake. It is not for the sake of a trifle as you can well imagine that I come here at this hour. Have patience just for a moment until I have told you; you surely are not afraid of me.

Veroni. No thought of it! I'm not afraid of anything in the world.

Frank (*seriously*). Do not talk that way, girl, when I myself, a man, have been driven here by fear. My father is on the way to Ottenschlag; though he did not say what his errand was, it is certainly not a good one.

Veroni (*frightened*). Your father? Go on, you just imagine that.

Frank. Would to God I were mistaken. But I must tell you what I fear so that you will not be surprised no matter what happens. That man is dangerous, when he finds everything is at stake; he would not shrink from any act of violence as I can say, because I have experienced it; and be as fearless as you will, still you only face him as a woman, as much of a child as I was, and it is to prevent him from maltreating the defenceless a second time that I am here.

Veroni (*more timidly*). I wouldn't have thought he'd have the courage for that, not from the way he acted before me today.

Frank. Though his courage may have fallen, despair will revive it. What a desperate man will venture, he will. Therefore I have come to protect you, I have come for the sake of us all, for your sake — for my sake — and even for his own sake, to prevent anything worse than has already happened!

VERONI (*has timidly neared him*). You really think he means anything as bad as that?

FRANK. He is out of his mind — he doesn't think nor care what happens. Have pity on my fear. I wish you would let me lie out there before your door — I dare not leave here — I dare not!

VERONI. You're a good boy. But to hide you here in the house that won't do, it wouldn't be proper.

FRANK. I suppose you are right, and I will not trouble you longer, but I shall keep my eye on the house tonight. You know now where to expect danger and where to look for help. I do not like to say "Good night" on top of all this — but God bless you! (*Walks up stage.*)

VERONI (*holds out both hands*). You certainly are the finest and most honest enemy one could ever have!

FRANK. I am not your enemy, Veroni — do not be mine either; I will explain to you, so that you may come to understand me, that I was your enemy until today; but now it is different. I hated you from childhood, you and yours, and if it was not exactly your fault that my father maltreated me so that I had to leave home, still you were the cause of it; and then the older I grew and the more my conscience troubled me for the wrong we had done you, the more embittered I grew toward you. But that is all over now that I have seen you! Let us make peace, Veroni, forgive me! Surely we have all suffered enough!

VERONI. I wouldn't have opened my heart so thoughtlessly to the fellow you just met here if I hadn't always even as a little thing longed for some one to protect me from want and danger and from the enmity of your family. That love would never have come but from my hate, and how happy I am that I can bury them both at once. Don't think ill of me because of that boy!

Frank. Certainly not. Do you care so much, Veroni, what I think of you?

Veroni. Why, yes, I do, because I trust you.

Frank. That you can, honestly.

Veroni. Then it's all right and well, and now I won't be afraid any more, either, knowing you'll stand by me.

Frank. You know I thought to myself this morning on Adam Farm, that if you were Veroni I ought to recognize you by something, but I failed to find it. It comes to me now that I see you standing here before me, full of pride and defiance of the whole world and singling me out for your full confidence — yes, this is the face I have seen so often, the face of little Veroni, just as unruly and as frank as when we four children were still playing together on Crossroads Farm. Do you remember what we used to play?

Veroni (*embarrassed*). Most likely some silly children's game.

Frank. We used to play "Uncle and Veroni" — and Jacob — now I remember quite well how he used to look — he was the priest who married us, and little Crescence was bridesmaid.

Veroni. Yes, and what a licking we got for that game, because mother didn't like it and said it wasn't proper.

Frank (*sighing*). But I forget that those days are long past — let us think of the present. I shall have neither rest nor peace until I know you are out of all danger — until this night is over — yes, until I see you safely arrived at the county seat, where I won't tell you not to do what has to be done. Let me go with you tomorrow, I shall take the same road anyway for I shall not return to Crossroads Farm.

Veroni. I'd like to have your company.

Frank (*turns*). Then good-by for today. I'm going to keep watch outside.

Veroni (*going with him to the window*). That will never do, see how black the sky is, and don't you feel the storm-wind coming from over the mountain-tops? You've barely got time to get down to Ottenschlag. Why should you hang around out there all night? We've got a long walk before us tomorrow, that would be pretty hard after a sleepless night; you need your few hours' rest too. The old man certainly won't come now, and as long as he isn't here now, he won't be able to do anything if he does come later. For you see — I don't mind telling you, for the whole neighborhood is full of rumors about it — it just happens that we're going to have late guests again. It may not be fifteen minutes before the smugglers come and that's why the dogs are still chained up. Later when these fellows are in and the dogs loose, no stranger will dare come near the place; and I wouldn't advise anybody to try it! So you can go down to Ottenschlag without fear.

Frank. I suppose you are right, for tonight you are doubtless safe under the protection of these lawless people, but tomorrow morning I will be here by sun-up, and then it's over the mountains to the county seat; once there let fate take its course and give reality its due, but till then let me keep my dream! Let us wander through the mountains, let us taste once more in spirit all the joys of that childhood that lies in the early dawn of life and only reveals to us its full happiness after it is gone from us forever. It is the only part of my life that had not its drop of gall, for even my future offers me no inviting prospect. Tomorrow I would once more see the radiance of childhood and home in the morning glow of the mountains, let that be my last concession to the yearning of my heart; these images I will take with me into the heat of the day that follows, and then wherever that day glares upon me — perhaps yonder across the ocean — it shall not down me.— But tomorrow into the mountains! — Good-by for now, Veroni! (*Climbs out of the window.*)

Veroni. God be with you. (*Going to the window.*) Now I don't even know whether he took the right path — you can't see a hand's breadth before you — if he strikes the wrong one he'll go an hour out of his way, and in this storm one can easily lose one's footing. (*Returning to centre.*) It'll be a bad night. This little house stands so lonely on the heights and the wind always takes hold of it on all sides as if he wanted to carry it away, and when that doesn't succeed, he gets angry and tosses it about until doors and windows squeak for fear. (*She has gone to the door and locked it, now walks to the window.*)

Scene IX

Veroni. Ferner *appearing just then at the windows.*

Ferner. Just leave it open.

Veroni (*frightened, retreats, aside*). There he is after all!

Ferner (*seats himself on the window-sill, his rifle between his knees*). Well, how that shrivels you up! Aye, it'll be wiser for you to say nothing and to hear reason! You're so obliging, you know! I don't suppose you said "No" to the fellow I just saw climbing out of the window, either. I know you don't care much for me, and you probably didn't imagine, when you made me so small today, that I'd get up again so soon and actually come here to see you. But it's just the plucky girls that I like, for it's great sport to take the starch out of 'em. That's what I want of you, and though it's some time since I gave up chasing girls, I've come to your window just the same. Ha ha ha! (*Rises, walks to her, gritting his teeth.*) Don't make a fuss, or I'll shoot you down at your first cry! Hand out the letter!

Veroni (*again thoroughly composed, aside*). Just wait, you card-sharp, watch me trump your ace!

Ferner. There's no time to think about it.

VERONI (*pretends anger*). You know mighty well yourself that I haven't got it any more. I don't doubt that out there in your hiding place you were enjoying the thought of my being defenseless here, unable to call for help and forced to do as you two please.

FERNER. Spin me no yarns, but hurry and empty your spool and hand out the letter.

VERONI. Don't make me wild with your useless teasing. Didn't you sick your own boy on me to bully the letter out of me? You've got what you want now. You might at least leave me in peace!

FERNER. My boy? What do you say? Are you crazy—or?—

VERONI. It seems you don't know the fellow that just got out of the window?

FERNER (*suddenly frightened*). Was that Frank? Jesus and Joseph!—yes!—I couldn't believe my eyes as he slipped by me in the dark . . . and yet—that suit—he's got ahead of me—he's got the letter—the villain wants to have his father completely at his mercy!

VERONI (*sarcastically*). I s'pose that vexes you terribly?

FERNER. We two are done with each other. You've dreamed of Crossroads Farm for the last time; you'll get your right on Saint Nevermore's day at the village of Nowhere, and I advise you not to talk any more about Farmer Perjury! By by! My boy can't be very far yet, I'll have a last word with him now!

[*Out through the window.*]

VERONI. May the good Lord forgive my sin; but I never would have believed how easy you can turn a cheat when you have to face one. Probably that's why there's so many, for it's just as we say about fools, each one makes a dozen more.—But now I've set the old man on Frank—I hope nothing 'll happen to him—ah! he won't be anywhere in sight—I'd feel mighty bad if anything happened to him, for I like him almost as much as a brother. Poor Jacob, my real brother, he's lying down in Ottenschlag now! Heavenly Father, I commend them both into Thy hands. Let the earth be light on the dead one and keep the other from distress and danger.

[*A loud peal of thunder, flashes of lightning. Drop curtain.*]

SCENE X

Wild, romantic, rocky landscape. The scene shows a plateau, in the left foreground (in the wings) a movable boulder, in the background one extending across the whole stage, ending in a bridge spanning a chasm concealed from the audience by a smaller boulder; in front to the right a so called "Marterl" (a memorial tablet for someone killed in mountain climbing).

FRANK, THE SMUGGLERS, *later* FERNER. *Tempest, thunder and lightning. Soft, peculiar marching music, to which (five or six) smugglers, with large bales of goods on their backs, march over the bridge above, silent until half across.*

FIRST SMUGGLER. Accursed storm. Hurry up, if the woods over yonder didn't break the wind, it would blow us off this rock, bundles and all. Let's hurry to get the wind at our backs again.

FRANK (*enters on the right*). I cannot find my way any more — I know how to get back — but what lies ahead of me? — So far the road went down hill; here it goes up again.

[THE LAST SMUGGLER *notices* FRANK, *the others are off the stage.*]

SECOND SMUGGLER (*whistling shrilly*). Hey, you down there, wait a bit, the path's only wide enough for one, wait till we get down.

[*Disappears and the soft music stops.*]

FERNER (*behind the scene*). Hey, hallo — Frank Ferner! Frank!

FRANK. Who calls?—Hallo, hey!

FERNER (*rushing upon the stage*). 'Twas here!—Is it you, Frank?

FRANK. What, are you still tramping around here?

FERNER. I know it's no use. Come along, you don't know the ground, I'll guide you.

FRANK. I do not need your guidance, our roads separate here.

[*The march music begins again. The smugglers march slowly across the back of the stage.*]

FERNER (*pulls* FRANK *forward, resolutely*). Frank, you've got that letter!

FRANK. Who says so?

FERNER. The girl herself.

FRANK. You have been there?—Well, if she says so, it must be true.

FERNER. Well, if that's the case, give it here!

FRANK. No! (*Turns.*)

[*The smugglers have left the stage.*]

FERNER (*holding him back*). Frank, for the sake of all our souls, don't defy me now; give me the letter, I must have it. Look, your old father begs you with uplifted hands, don't drive him to despair! I don't know what might happen, Frank, for what with fear and hope, I hardly know myself.

FRANK (*frees himself*). Do not apologize before anything has happened—I will wait to see what you are going to do.

FERNER (*seizing him again*). You stay here! I'm your father, you've got to obey me, that's what the Scriptures say.

FRANK. Let me go, I say—I no longer have anything in common with you. (*He pushes him off, so that* FERNER *staggers against the boulder, up which* FRANK *is climbing.*)

FERNER (*recovering himself*). Scoundrel, you lay hands on me? You're taking advantage of your father's misfortune — Oh, that I let you get out of my hands alive years ago in that kitchen!

[*Hurries up stage.*]

[FRANK *has appeared above and walks toward the bridge.*]

FERNER (*screaming*). By all the saints, Frank, if you don't stop and hand out the letter, I'll shoot you down like a chamois!

FRANK (*by the bridge*). Remember that the fingers on the trigger of your rifle are the same you lifted for the oath — and then lift — lift your arm if you can!

FERNER (*beside himself*). Devil from hell! (*He shoots.*)

[FRANK *falls without a word from the bridge. Agitated music, while* FERNER *staggers forward, followed then by tremulous strains.*]

FERNER (*trembling and hiding his face*). O my Saviour, did this have to come, too? (*Short pause, drops his hands.*) He would have it, he was simply destined to fall by my hand from childhood — now he lies far below — the torrent will drag him away, by the time he strikes the rapids yonder over the sharp rocks, there won't be a whole bone in his body — the letter is carried away — no one can bring to light any more that evidence against me and my accomplice. That's a Divine dispensation; it must be a Divine dispensation. (*He kneels before the crucifix.*) I always knew thou wouldst not forsake me in my need. (*His strength fails him and he sinks to the ground, his hands slipping down the post.*)

[*A short, sombre melody, indicating a prayer, mingling with the march of the smugglers, a second troop of whom appear above by the bridge.*]

THE RETURN OF THE VICTORS

From the Painting by Franz Defregger

[illegible]

ACT III

A wretched looking hut. Door centre; to the right wooden stairs leading to the attic; to the left a tile-stove; down stage a table, two stools, an arm chair; by the side wall a bench, before it two spinning wheels, between them and the arm chair a pine torch holder; such a torch lights up the scene.

SCENE I

Aunty o' the woods is reading in a book of sermons. ROSIE *and* KATIE *sit on the bench spinning wearily and sleepily; as the curtain rises the* BARBER *is coming down the stairs.*

BARBER (*walking forward and then sitting down by the old woman's side*). Folks 'twas the best thing you c'd do t' call me right away, so I c'd look after 'im in time; though there's folks in the village that say, "The barber can't do anythin' agin' nature, either, unless it helps."

AUNTY. How's my brother getting along?

BARBER. He's sleepin' the sleep o' the just, an' tomorro' he'll get up a well man; you'd orter go to bed, too, girls, your father's out o' danger now.

AUNTY. My soul, how happy I am, I'd begun to think we'd have t' have a death in the house, for the death-watch never stopped tickin' in the wall all night long.

BARBER. Nonsense, Aunty, I tell ye the death-watch is nothin' but a worm that butts his head agin' the wood; an' it means rotten boards an' nothin' else!—You goin' to set up awhile yet, Aunty?

AUNTY. 'S long 's the storm lasts, for I'd be too afraid t' sleep.

BARBER. Well, y' know I'd rather wait myself for 't t' let up; I can't abear t' get soaked; o' course I had to come here on account o' the sick man, but it's different at home; there's my wife that can't stan' the wet, either, and she'll count up every drop agin' when I get home.

These girls here ain't like that, they're plucky, they came out after me for their father's sake in spite o' this devilish weather. Well, they'll both of 'em get good husbands for a reward.

Rosie. Yes, barber, but one 'at isn't afraid t' go home to his wife.

Katie. An' one 'at won't be in the state you was in t' day so 't you c'd count up on him before the storm ever came the drops o' the wet 'at your wife can't stand.

Barber. Oho, oho, you mean 'cause I drink. You little imp. Men in my work just haf to drink, so we don't feel folks' sufferin' so much. I on'y wish the storm was over.

Katie. You mean the one at home — or —

Barber. Both.

Rosie. Come, aunty, close your book, all your prayers won't make this storm end very soon. This 'ud be a night for a regular shudder story. Tell us one.

Katie (*pinches her own arm*). There's a queer pleasure in feelin' your flesh creep.

Aunty. You know, the barber can't bear these ghost-stories.

Barber. Tell away, Goody. I don't mind you. Having goose-flesh or bad dreams and wrong-headed notions; it's all the same to me.

Rosie (*makes herself comfortable*). Then aunty'll begin.

Katie. I'm waitin'.

Aunty (*slaps the book to*). Well, then listen! Once the' was a farmer —

Rosie (*laughing*). Oh, my! That's the old story about the lazy farmer 'at thought when he was workin' he had t' know what for.

Katie. Go on, you don't know; I bet aunty means the story about the farmer 'at took his cow to market an' then two rogues came along. . . .

AUNTY (*slaps the table*). You gabble and gabble, ye silly dunces; don't ye know that all stories begin that way? Well: Once upon a time the' was a farmer—

BARBER. Hush! Hark!—somebody's trampin' up t' the house!

FERNER, *drenched, agitated, pale, with disheveled hair, enters at centre and shakes the water from his hat.*

FERNER (*with a hollow voice*). Praised be Jesus Christ!

ALL (*except* AUNTY). Forever and ever.

AUNTY. Now, now, don't mess up the whole room, why, you're just drippin'—forever and ever, Amen! Si' down back there by th' stove. It seems the weather caught ye in the mountains.

FERNER. Of course.

AUNTY. You want shelter here? All right. Are ye far from home? Hey? I don't know ye, ye don't live in this village.

FERNER (*sits down by the stove*). No.

AUNTY. Ye don't say much.

ROSIE. Let 'im alone, aunty. I wouldn't feel like talkin' either, if I'd got such a soakin'. Go on with your story.

AUNTY. Once the' was a farmer; he was very rich, an' a poor tenant had owed him some money for years an' years, an' when the poor man came to die he sent word t' the rich farmer t' come to his death-bed an' he paid 'im everything he owed 'im; then he called 'is wife and said,—"Wife, I've paid everything." An' he died. The poor widow buried 'er husband an' a few days after she went t' the rich farmer an' says, "My husband paid you off, gimme the receipt." "What," says the rich farmer, "what d'ye want? I haven't got any receipt for you, for I never got a penny from your husband."

ROSIE. The villain!

Katie (*drawing her close*). Be quiet.

Aunty. Then the poor woman went to court an' said, this is what my husband—God rest 'im, tol' me;—but the rich farmer said "No." Then the rich farmer had t' go afore the court an' he boldly lifted his hand to th' Lord an' swore it was just's he said; an' they took all they had fr'm the poor widow an' her two children, and so the rich farmer was doubly paid an' doubly rich an' doubly happy. He thought t' himself, now I've got the advantage o' my sin an' now I'll make my peace again with heaven, and so he began t' go to church an' to pray and to give alms and to pay for masses, an' after that he was called the pious farmer by everybody. An' proud he was that everything had turned out after 'is own heart. When he prayed for rain, it rained; when he prayed for his cattle, then all his cows calved as nice as ye pleased, an' when he prayed for children, then his wife was delivered so easy 't she hardly needed a midwife, an' if he wished f'r a boy that's what it was! So he thought blessin' was simply tumblin' into his hands, an' he thought nobody c'd be on better terms with heaven than himself.

Rosie. Oh say, the beginnin' o' his story just makes me mad. Such a wicked fellow.

Aunty. Wait a bit, it ends all right.

Ferner (*visibly stirred, comes forward*). You're telling a story there—it interests me—with your permission. (*He sits down on the vacant chair.*) I like to hear stories.

Aunty. Well, then draw up closer—but what's the matter with ye? You're tremblin' 's if ye had a fever, an' ye haven' got a dry thread on your body; that can't possibly be good for ye; hadn't you better lie down in the hay loft?

Barber. I sh'd think so, myself; Aunty, you've got common sense!

Ferner (*shakes his head positively*). Finish your story first.—I'm specially interested to know what happened to the pious rich farmer.

[*Listens, supporting his head with both hands.*]

Aunty. Well, then, as I was sayin', the farmer lived on as peaceful as if the good Lord had died and leased the world t' the devil. An' when he felt death comin' on, he thinks to himself, now I'll set myself absolutely right with heaven, an' I can't fail to get into heaven, nor have the last seat either; so he sends for the father confessor, an' the servant he sends f'r 'im has only got to the gate, when he sees the priest comin' along, and he says to 'im, "I know, I know, I came right along." All the servants saw him go into the farmer's room, an' when he was in there he sent everybody out and sat down on the edge o' the bed. (*Louder.*) But at the very hour—an' that's what surprised the whole village—when the priest was supposed t' be with the rich farmer the real priest was sittin' in the village inn playin' cards with the mayor and the school-master!

Rosie. Katie, 'd you hear that?

Katie. Surely, now's when you begin to get frightened.

Barber (*aside*). Stupid business.

Ferner (*trembling, lets both hands sink down, when they look at him he turns his head away*). Go right on!

Aunty. When the two was alone in the bedroom an' it was so quiet 'at they c'd hear the clock tickin', the fellow on the edge o' the bed that the rich farmer had taken for the confessor all at once began to curse so 't the man in the bed was horrified. Then the farmer tried to cross himself so he c'd begin his confession, but he couldn't manage it nor he couldn't call on God an' the beloved Saints. But the man in black began to laugh when he saw that and said, "Don't torment yourself, farmer, I know everything and even better 'n you do." Then the farmer plucked up his last bit o' courage an' said: "I hope all my sins are forgiven;

if I was still unpardoned, the' wouldn't 'a been any blessin' on my farm an' on my fireside.'' The black one laughs so it shakes the farmer in his bed, an' he stretches himself so high 'at he bumps into the roof-beam. ''Farmer,'' says he, ''Ye're all off. Ye lifted your hand to heaven an' swore your lie was true, an' from that time ye was pledged to me, an' the One above c'd neither help nor harm ye from that moment, an' I gave ye such a good life just so ye'd be blinded all the more; your worst wishes have been granted ye, '' 'cause I wanted ye to sin even in your prayers so no road c'd lead ye back to Him I can't name.''

Ferner (*his whole body shaking, looks with glassy eyes at the story-teller*). Accursed fiend!

Aunty (*glances at him angrily on account of the interruption and then continues*). ''Farmer,'' says the devil, ''you belong to me, ye're mine, for ye've spent your whole life in my service. I was your superior an' your master from the moment ye forswore the truth, the cross, until later when I fulfil your sinful requests, for it's written: 'I'm the father o' lies an' the prince o' this world.' ''

Ferner (*horrified*). That's the way it goes! (*Short pause — once more he pulls himself together, half defiant.*) That's only a made-up story.

Aunty (*as before*). Well, as I was going t' say, when the farmer realized all this he tried to cross himself, but the devil laughed, ''I know ye'd like to make a cross, an' that might save you too, if your hands was still yours, but, ye blockhead, ye forget that the fingers you'd haf to crook for that are the fingers ye swore with, so lift your arm if ye can.'' . . .

Ferner (*springs up with a wild cry*). Frank! — What do you folks know about it? — Have I got a mark on my forehead, I'd like to know? What are you so curious about? Away! (*Turns wide-eyed.*) What's this? From every corner eyes are staring at me with the strangest look. What do you want to ask me?— Away!—Out with you! (*Pulling himself up, he turns the chair over, a cloud of dust rises; his foot gets caught in the chair.*) Ha, ha! why do you rise out of the ground in gray, old enemy, why not in your favorite livery—black, all black? Am I too insignificant for you, or are you so sure of me? Hands off me! though I feel your clutch choking me—though I feel the cold vipers writhing up my body—hands off—I won't confess to you—to God alone will I confess! Go! You must leave me! Do you think I can't cross myself any more? See here! (*Tries in vain to lift his right hand, at the same time he draws the left in a quick, trembling sweep over his whole right side, and drops on the floor with the cry:*) Jesus!

BARBER (*jumping to his side*). One o' ye run to the village and have 'em ring the knell.

FERNER (*raising himself slightly on his right arm*). Crescence. . . . [*Dies.*]

[*Tableau.—Drop curtain.*]

SCENE III

VERONI'S *room as in the second act, the candle has burned down. As the curtain rises, soft slumber music is heard, into which the smuggler's march enters, swelling until it drowns the other music, and stopping abruptly when* VERONI *rises from her bed.*

VERONI. *Later* LIZZY.

VERONI (*lies fully dressed athwart the bed, her feet on the floor. She becomes more and more restless as the music grows stronger—she rises, the music stops*). What is it?

LIZZY (*knocks*). Veroni! Veroni!

VERONI. Oh, granny's calling! (*Gets up and goes to the door.*)

LIZZY. Veroni, open the door!

VERONI. Yes, granny. (*Unlocks the door.*)

LIZZY (*stands in the doorway*). The smugglers have come. The house is getting lively, though that wouldn't concern you; you're far enough away from the noise to rest quietly here, and I shouldn't have routed you out the first night you're here, but we need your bedroom for a city gentleman the smugglers brought with 'em.

VERONI. Well, I don't suppose they're beginning to smuggle folks in too.

LIZZY. Well, he's a pretty sad piece of goods; his rifle went off and he shot himself and fell head first into the ravine of the mountain brook; if the smugglers hadn't come just in time to reach him with a rope, he'd have been lost; for he was hanging in the thicket below, and it was already giving way under his weight.

VERONI (*frightened, aside*). For the love of all the Saints, suppose that was Frank.

LIZZY. I'll bring him in right away; while you put on your jacket and fix your hair. Then you can come over into my room. [*Exit.*]

VERONI (*mechanically obeys* LIZZY'S *directions*). I hate to think it — it surely can't be. Oh, if the poor boy was to suffer for me! It's surely a stranger.

SCENE IV

VERONI. LIZZY *leads* FRANK *into the room.*

VERONI. Blessed Saviour, it's he. (*Rushes to him and supports him on the other side; passionately:*) Frank, Frank! — this is my fault. Don't be angry, I beg of you, that I set the old man on you; I might have known that would be the outcome.

[LIZZY *now stands to one side; astonished, she has dropped* FRANK'S *arm.* VERONI *is now supporting him alone.*]

FRANK (*pale, with disheveled hair, walks somewhat unsteadily, his clothing disarranged; his left arm in a sling, clenching his teeth now and then*). What are you saying — I — I — myself am —

VERONI. Yes, no doubt you shot yourself with the other man's rifle.

FRANK (*sinks into the armchair*). If you would do me a favor, say nothing about it. (*Closes his eyes.*)

LIZZY. You know each other, you're so intimate? Well, look at this! The devil himself couldn't make this out! — Who is this?

VERONI (*in an undertone*). Ferner's Frank.

LIZZY (*most astonished*). The young Farmer Perjury!

VERONI. He's no Farmer Perjury, granny, not he!

LIZZY. What, are you sweet on him to boot?

VERONI. Oh, how you talk! — But if you want to please me, granny, leave me with him.

LIZZY (*hesitating*). Your funny speeches — and this intimacy — let anybody try to make that out. (*A noise outside, clinking of glasses and calling:* Hallo, Mother Lizzy! *She answers through the door.*) I'll be there right away, you scamps. (*Looks at* VERONI *and* FRANK *and shakes her head.*) Well, play the good Samaritan, for all of me,— he can't hurt you. (*Leaving.*) Just think of all the folks that have come together under my roof this day! I never'd have thought it. [*Exit.*]

SCENE V

VERONI (*in an undertone*). Frank, we're alone, may I talk now without pretending?

FRANK (*takes his right hand from his face*). What for — tell me what for? — Will it change anything? I met with an accident and that settles the matter, and neither you nor the other one is to blame.

VERONI. I can't stop thinking that you've had to suffer for my sake, that you may be crippled for life, that you may. . . .

Frank. Let us speak of something else. Veroni, what must be, will be. Do not talk so much about it, it tortures me and my head aches so — I need rest. (*Leans back and closes his eyes.*)

Veroni (*steps a little way from him*). How the fever shakes him and how his teeth are locked. (*She sits down on the other side and shades* Frank *from the light with her hand.*)

Frank (*uneasily*). Tell me, Veroni, what is that soft buzzing in the air, perhaps there is a sting fly in the room. I am timid and helpless as a child.

Veroni (*listens*). There isn't anything in the room here — the sound comes from outside. (*Goes to the window.*) It's coming up from Ottenschlag. (*Opens the window, the knell is barely audible.*) They're ringing the knell for some one down there.

Frank. Happy soul! I wish they were ringing it for me!

Veroni (*has closed the window and goes back to her former place*). Oh, come, why are you so despairing now, and hardly an hour ago you were my brave boy that was going with me over the mountains tomorrow and then merrily away into the wide world!

Frank (*with a sad smile*). Over the mountains? As bruised in body and soul as I am feeling, I can reach them only with my eyes! Into the world? Oh, when I said that I was strong, now I am weak, and that makes one an entirely different man, Veroni — and I feel that the shame which is falling upon our house is all at once condemning it utterly, and that I shall not survive, not as you see me now — I think it is better so!

Veroni. Don't talk so. I'd take mighty little joy in getting my rights, if it's going to affect you that way. You're the best and dearest friend I've got in the world; I don't know of any other.

Frank. I thank you, Veroni — I am so glad that you are with me at this hour, so that I can ask you to keep me in kind remembrance. Hark, they have stopped toll-ing, and down there in the little house they are doubtless praying for him who has taken his last journey — I shall take mine gladly, whither so ever it may lead. I am thinking how down yonder in the little graveyard — where your mother is resting too — one's heart would sleep peacefully, bedded in spite of all in a little plot of home soil, and how no misery nor shame could ever touch it again. I hope you will have wild roses for the grave of your friend — you and Toni will come to my grave, won't you? — After you are reconciled, and the two farms are one — the richest couple will visit the grave of the poorest farmer's boy. Please tell Toni that, I am sure he will not envy me this last tribute of love!

Veroni (*with a brief faint smile*). Don't let that lad worry you! (*Seriously.*) If he came this minute, dressed in gold from head to foot, like a prince, and you stood beside him just as you are, in your torn shaggy jacket, sick and weak, I'd say to him, "This man is my friend; you're not any more." So you see Crossroads Farm will likely stay single, and its mistress too! No, Frank, don't say such gloomy things — now do stay alive, oh, please do; try to imagine how in the morning the mountains will light up, that you said they would revive with their golden rays home and childhood in your heart; think how the fresh morning breezes will blow in from the green pine-woods, like a cool cloud of incense while the birds outside are singing their high mass; O Frank, that'll surely make you want to live again; it's so beautiful to look out into the world this way, the same old world, and yet new at every dawn and with every evening glow. No, Frank, you simply can't die!

Frank. Ah, if all that is burdening my heart were a dream, if I could shake it off in the morning, the bright, happy morning; if I could awake, though without parents or inheritance, suffering neither from others' nor my own sin and shame — entirely dependent on my own strength, why, then —

Veroni. Yes, then you'd want to live, wouldn't you? And look, Frank, I don't know what I wouldn't do for you, if you'd stay here at home. I'd nurse you till you got all well again and be crazy to do it — and then you could stay on my Crossroads Farm as caretaker — and anyway, what do you mean? You haven't committed any sin, and I'd like to know who's to say anything against you, if I honor you! Come, stay here and don't talk any more about dying.

Frank (*clutching his head with both hands*). Stop, Veroni, for goodness sake! You are trying to comfort me, but you do not know how you hurt me. On the old farm every spot turns the poisonous thorn of a gloomy recollection against me, and it is on the old farm that you offer me the bread of charity, timidly I should walk around there, a living foil to your straightforward, honest, compassionate heart — commiserated, scorned, or shunned, according as your servants pitied or hated or despised me — no, Veroni, do not lure me back into life — the shame simply cannot be kept dark any longer.

Veroni. Be good, Frank, don't get so mixed up. If I was dreaming with you now to wake in the morning as the poor, hunted girl I've been, your father as my old enemy, as powerful as ever, and only having won you as my new friend,— could you die then and forsake me? Surely not, and in that case I think we two could face the whole world. Frank, I never knew any one so honest, so faithful, so good as you, that ran right into death for somebody else's rights, for an enemy's cause and to your own harm and loss; and I wouldn't give up your life at any price! What if I let the same lie in eternal darkness and intrusted all my claims to you! Frank, I'll buy your death from you, how much do you want for it so you'll keep on living till we both have gray hair?

Frank (*leaning back*). Veroni, you speak so wildly — I cannot follow you — what do you mean?

VERONI. I mean, it's better for the dead claim to stay dead than for you to die. (*Takes the letter from her bodice, looks at it thoughtfully, then holds it over the flame; aside.*) My good father in heaven, don't be angry at your daughter, even if she gives away your claims and her own. It's all mine now, anyway, and so I'm not hurting anybody else. And you Blessed Saints in heaven above surely can't object to my obeying my heart and not trying to get my advantage in your good world! (*Holds out the burning letter, draws a deep breath.*) There — it's done! From tomorrow, granny won't need to wake me up for work neither by day or by night.

FRANK (*opens his eyes*). Light! Is the morning coming? (*Seeing the burning paper.*) What's the matter?

VERONI. Do you mind? I'm burning up what grieves you.

FRANK (*raising himself up as if to stop her*). Veroni — the letter — what are you doing? — Your evidence! — What is to come now?

VERONI. Let come what will, if only I can keep you from going out of the world!

FRANK (*looks at her in surprise — his breast heaves, he stretches his unwounded arm out to her, bursting forth*): Veroni!!! — Why, you must love me from the very bottom of your heart!

VERONI (*starting*). Frank! Frank! (*Fondly, falling on his breast.*) It may be so. (*Hiding her head bashfully.*) But you needn't let the whole world know it.

[FRANK *seizes and turns her head and looks into her eyes. Short pause. Outside murmur of various voices.*]

SCENE VI

VERONI, FRANK, LIZZY, CRESCENCE, TONI, *the* FOREMAN, *servants from Adam and Crossroads farms and farmers from Ottenschlag.*

LIZZY (*outside*). Well, come in, then, if you want to talk to him! [*All enter.*]

HELLERER. Ah, there he is — don't be frightened.

CRESCENCE (*weeping, goes to* FRANK'S *side*). Brother!

FRANK. What is the matter?

HELLERER. All the servants at Adam Farm and Crossroads Farm were out looking for your father, for he disappeared last night.—Well, you didn't know the old man very well, and only saw him just this morning after so many years. It won't affect you so much but we found him down in Ottenschlag in the death chamber. (*With emphasis.*) Mother Lizzy, he was lying side by side with your daughter's boy.

FRANK (*deeply moved*). A short reunion indeed! (*Aside.*) The wound in my left arm reminds me still how determined he was to retain estate and position, and now—your Crossroads Farm finds you nothing but a handful of earth.

HELLERER. You're master now, don't forsake your sister, but be sure to think of her, if her affair with Toni is to come off. Maybe on account of Veroni—

FRANK (*leads* CRESCENCE *to* TONI). Veroni no longer stands between you. When the year of mourning is over, I shall take her to me on Crossroads Farm. (*Softly to* VERONI.) Take me with you to your heritage, dear mistress of Crossroads Farm; forget in the love of the young farmer the hatred of the old, let us lock up in our hearts the secret of the dead man; and that the earth may lie light upon him, forgive him, Veroni!

VERONI. Let him rest in peace, Amen. (*Clings to him.*) Frank, when you're well again, you'll go with me up the mountains after all and from the highest peak we'll shout across the land: "It's all past and done with; there are new folks here, and the world's only just beginning!"

[*Dawn—Tableau.*]

THE LIFE OF PETER ROSEGGER

By Laurence Fossler, M.A.

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THE famous author of *The Forest Schoolmaster*, *Forest Home*, and numerous other writings, is of peasant parentage. He was born July 31, 1843, at Alpel near Krieglach, Styria (Austria). In *Forest Home* more especially—though also in many other sketches—Rosegger acquaints his readers with the humble and narrow surroundings in which his lot was cast. He tells of the trials and hardships of his parents, of their futile struggle to ward off extreme poverty and want brought on by sickness, repeated failure of crops and other losses. Our poet himself at the age of seventeen was apprenticed to a tailor with whom he spent the regulation three-year period in learning his trade. It was customary in that part of Styria for tradesmen—tailors, cobblers, weavers and other journeymen—to pass from farmstead to farmstead in the exercise of their trade. Rosegger tells us that the sixty-seven houses in which he worked during his tailor-period were the "high school" in which he acquired a good part of his education, that is, experience and an intimate knowledge of his mountaineers. He had been given the merest rudiments of an education by an old schoolmaster, one Michael Patterer, who had been discharged from state employ because of his "liberal" views. His mother, too, the daughter of a widowed charcoal burner, could "read print." She, though uneducated, was a woman of rare good sense and judgment, of a native poetic temperament, sane, sympathetic, large-souled and healthy-minded.

In a touchingly beautiful sketch in *Forest Home*, entitled "About my Mother," the author tells his readers: "The best in me — I have it from her, a whole world of poetry lay in her soul.'' He remembers with fine gratitude the joy that was his when she sang to him, her first-born, the Styrian folk-songs or told him some folk-tale. She it was who brightened his otherwise prosaic youth and cultivated and fostered his judgment respecting the essential values in life. Even though her mental horizon was very narrow and though a little — perhaps a good deal — of the superstition of her surroundings clung to her, we readily believe Rosegger when he tells us that this did not interfere with her essential sanity, her true womanly ways and exquisite soul-life.

The father, too, though not of the same mental calibre as the mother, was a decided factor in the boy's early training. His native industry, probity and honesty, his deeply religious nature — likewise liberally mingled with superstitiousness — his spirit of neighborliness and helpfulness, and his devotion* to his family, have all left abiding impressions upon his son's character.

The impulse — necessity rather — to express his thoughts and feelings in story and song asserted itself early in our poet. All through his apprentice days, he had employed his holidays and other leisure hours in original composition, if he had writing material or means to provide himself with such. Rosegger records with evident delight how the new schoolmaster, Weberhofer, came to his aid financially, by giving him a '' Silberzehnerl '' (about a dime) as a gratuity when the tailors were working for him.

'' It was the only gratuity I got during my apprenticeship. Only my trusted friends shall know what those first-fruits were used for. And, because you, dear reader,

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* Rosegger records that when he wanted to "extend his education" by adding to the year with Michael Patterer some instruction from the new teacher, Eustach Weberhofer, his mother, with considerable diplomacy, induced his father to give his consent. "The boy may get some book-learnin' for all I care; he doesn't know enough to drive oxen." (*Meinetwegen soll er was Herrisches lernen, für die Ochsen ist er eh zu dumm.*)

PETER ROSEGGER

belong to these, you should know that for that ten-kreutzer piece I bought — time. If time is money, then money, no doubt, can be turned into time. I got for my good money six night-hours in the shape of two tallow candles, by the light of which I could read and write, a business for which I had no time during the day. I got back two kreutzers, and with these I bought some prunes. Blaser-Hansel took them from me and this for two reasons: first, because he wanted prunes and, secondly, because he was stronger than I."

His reading consisted of the *Volkskalender*, a book or two of a devotional nature and such chance printed matter as might be found in the scattered peasant cottages of the neighborhood, or on his master's clothes-patterns. In one of the sketches of *Forest Home* he relates that, not having the means to buy a *Volkskalender*, he got a few sheets of paper, stitched them together, and proceeded to make himself an almanac, illustrations, weather prognostications and all. And because of his greater success in "forecasting"— he having prophesied "thunderstorm and rain" where the other calendar prophets had foreseen "sunshine" — his first literary venture proved a success. People gladly paid the two kreutzers demanded for the privilege of reading the stories, poems, jokes, and other matter which the Rosegger *Volkskalender* contained. True, the next year's "issue" impaired the author's reputation considerably, as he had the misfortune to "let Whitsun-tide, that lovely festival, fall upon the last Sunday in March." Rosegger remarks slyly that, seeing that others would no longer read his almanac, "nothing was left for me to do but to read it myself." As a distant relative of his — the same "godfather," by the way, who later on carried the celebrated "fifteen pounds of literature" to Dr. Svoboda in Graz — watched the boy stitching the sheets of paper together for another calendar, he remarked: "I see well enough, boy, you are no farmer, you were born to be something else. How clever you are and how handy with the needle! You must learn the tailor-business."

In the spring of 1864, Rosegger had mailed some of his productions to " Herr Martini, editor of the *Tagespost* in Graz." But Martini was the editor of the *Grazer Zeitung* and not of the *Post.* However the letter was taken to the editorial rooms of the *Tagespost*, of which Dr. Adalbert Swoboda was then director. Swoboda at once detected in the material submitted a virile, genuine note; the freshness and originality of the unlettered, necessarily ignorant and untutored mountain youth appealed to him so strongly that he, under date of March 22, requested Rosegger to send him all of his writings for inspection. Then it was that the relative above mentioned, carried the heavy package—fifteen pounds—on his back the fifty miles to Graz and delivered it to Swoboda.

At the end of Swoboda's examination of Rosegger's literary efforts, he published some excerpts from the writings in the *Tagespost* and gave an acount of the young nature-poet and of his needs and necessities. He likewise called upon any who might be benevolently inclined to extend a helping hand to young Rosegger, so that he might avail himself of the advantages of an education and escape the unfortunate, narrowing conditions of his native Alpel.

We have Rosegger's own delightful account of how, on the afternoon of the day before Christmas, 1864, while he and his master were at work at their trade in the home of one of their customers, his good Master Natz at last laid down his tape and scissors and told his journeyman to quit work for the holidays. As Rosegger pulled the thread out of his needle, preparatory to packing his things together, the master growled: " Well, how often have you been told not to pull the thread out of your needle when you leave a job: the threads left in the needle belong to the tailor and during the year they amount to a skein. You, surely, are not in a position to throw away anything." When Rosegger arrived at home about 4 o'clock in the afternoon—" stepping with my thin legs over my sister who was just scrubbing the floor near the door "—his mother was busy in the kitchen getting ready for the holiday on the morrow. On coming into the living-room, where he was already busy with his books and papers, she did as was her habit of doing when anything weighed on her mind—looked out of the window repeatedly. Finally she said: "Have you heard about it? You will have to go down to Krieglach tomorrow; there seem to be some letters and other things at the postoffice for you. Teamster Knittler told us about it. They would not let him have the things, because some were to be signed for."

Instead of waiting until morning, Rosegger donned his "Sunday best" and set out that very night to assure himself of the truth or falsity of the report. He arrived at Krieglach at 11 o'clock, only to find the postoffice closed. We readily believe him when he tells us that he spent a "böse Nacht," a night full of anxiety and feverish expectation. But wait he must. The next morning, an hour before the office opened, he stood before the window through which messages from the outside world were to come to him. At last the official arrived. Others crowded ahead. Prolonged torture of uncertainty. When the early rush was over the official took out a bunch of letters from a drawer, laid them before the astonished youth, not only letters, but money remittances and packages of books "*Alles für den steirischen Naturdichter*" (All for the Styrian nature-poet).

Swoboda's appeal on behalf of Rosegger had met with immediate and hearty response. Among others a certain Herr Giontini, head of a publishing firm in Laibach, Carinthia, offered to take young Rosegger into his establishment and provide such facilities as seemed best suited to the young man's needs. Upon Swoboda's advice, Rosegger accepted the place, though leaving home with a heavy heart. (February 14, 1865.)

The poet tells us with naïve simplicity of the feeling of utter loneliness and heartsickness that attacked him in his new surroundings. He was tormented beyond endurance by that strange malady — homesickness. Despite the utmost kindness of Herr Giontini and others in the establishment, Rosegger packed his few belongings the seventh day after his arrival, to go back to his hills and his folk.

Swoboda, Reininghaus and other friends at Graz, who had bidden the youth god-speed when he had set out for Laibach only a week before, were scarcely surprised at his sudden return. They understood his naïve *mal de pays*, they honored his love of his native mountains, they could sympathize with his feeling of utter wretchedness in a totally new environment, in an environment foreign even in language. But they would not listen to Rosegger's returning to Alpel. In some way they would find means and opportunity to remedy, if possible, his lack of scholastic training.

Since Rosegger — now almost twenty-two years old — had had only the most meagre school advantages, it was necessary to provide private instruction for him in the very rudiments, before he could be benefited by the courses at the Academy of Commerce. This was done. When admitted, though only as a "special student," his maturity and ability enabled him to make such progress that he soon outstripped his younger classmates.

Franz Davidowsky, the director of the Academy, Rudolph Falb, one of the school's ablest professors, and many others, were of inestimable help and comfort to the eager tailor journeyman during those days at Graz. It was their first care to put Rosegger in touch with what had been thought and written rather than to encourage him in his own efforts at self-expression. They acquainted him with the writings of Auerbach, Stifter, August Silberstein, Robert Hamerling, Count Auersperg, and other noted authors. Treasures of literature, of which he had never heard or dreamed in his Alpel home, were opened to his hungry heart and eyes. A new world, a world of letters and art and poetry, unrolled before his astonished vision and beckoned him to know and feel and enjoy.

Dr. Swoboda and Robert Hamerling proved particularly helpful to Rosegger by their ripe and kindly criticism of his own literary efforts. And when the time came (1869) to tempt fame by appealing to a larger public through a little volume of dialect poems, it was the older poet, Hamerling, who provided not only the Introduction to the collection — but made the selections, gave the booklet a name* and found a publisher. A splendid proof this, of Hamerling's generous and far-sighted friendship. The little volume was received with due appreciation from the press and the public. Success had come to the young nature-poet; he had a right to look forward to a life of literary activity.

Rosin and Fir-needles, a little volume of sketches and stories, also in dialect, added to the author's reputation. It appeared that same year. From now on he produced volume after volume, mostly drawn from a seemingly inexhaustible reservoir of personal experiences and interpretative of his mountain folk and their ways. He extended his education by travel, by pursuing some courses at the university and by associating with literary men of note. Among the latter Ludwig Anzengruber was, undoubtedly, the most famous. He, too, was a son of the people, an embodiment of the health and virility of his native stock, uninfluenced by the literary fads and fashions of the day.

The year 1870 brought out Rosegger's first book in High German, *Sketches of Alpine Folks and their Ways.* The appearance of this book resulted in the flattering offer from the most important publishing house in Hungary to become Rosegger's publisher. The head of this house, Gustav Heckenast, was a true lover of literature, discriminating, enterprising, sympathetic, and unselfish. During the nine years of their connection, fourteen volumes of Rosegger's stories came from Heckenast's press.

To Rosegger's great disappointment the sporadic attempts to gain recognition and fame in the drama were unsuccessful. As was the case with that other famous Austrian author, Marie von Ebner-Eschenbach, the muse of the drama had not sat at our author's cradle. Fortunately he turned defeat into victory by recognizing his limitations and discovering his natural domain — that of the *raconteur*, the story-teller.

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* *Zither und Hackbrett* (Cither and Dulcimer).

The year 1872 is an important one in Rosegger's life. His mother's death, early that year, had distressed him greatly. He reproached himself for having accepted the sacrifices she and the family had made in letting him go his own way in a world so apart from theirs. Poverty and want had taken their abode in the *Waldbauerhaus*. The old home had to be sold to satisfy creditors of all sorts. He himself, of course, was still unable to relieve the family's necessities. He spent the summer roaming over his native hills and seeking to throw off the heavy burdens that had fallen on the Rosegger household.

It was on one of these walks,* that the idea, plan and scope of *The Forest Schoolmaster*, perhaps the most famous of his books, came to him in a moment of inspiration. He tells us that he then and there " seated himself on a fallen tree-trunk, took out his note-book and did not rise till the outline of the new story was on paper." It seems almost incredible that so signal a feat could have been executed under the circumstances. But evidently genius effected the flux of manifold stored-up riches into a perfect whole. The fires of heartache and sorrow fused the scattered previous grains into a nugget of pure gold.

The year, indeed the day, is further noteworthy because it was the beginning of Rosegger's acquaintance with his future wife, his beloved Anna. She, with a lady friend, had come to visit Rosegger's birthplace. His fame as an author had made his birthplace a Mecca for the two young women. Late that evening, after Rosegger had already retired, a friend of his informed him of the object of their visit and asked him to accompany the two ladies on their quest the following morning. One of them — the younger one — the friend described as "having Madonna eyes and lips as fresh as wild cherries about the Feast of Assumption." Though Rosegger would not promise, he met the ladies the next day, and the acquaintance with Anna Pichler ripened later into love and marriage. Alas, the happy union was only of short duration! A few days after the birth of her second child, Anna died (March 4, 1875).

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* June 20, 1872.

More than ever were the greatest possible love and sympathy of his friends needed and generously given in those days of affliction and loss. Rosegger was dazed, stunned, seemingly unable to rally and gather strength. As a part of their ministrations his friends urged him to carry out a plan that had lain in his mind before — only dimly and formless, to be sure — of starting a high-class periodical devoted to the needs and requirements of his people, yet popular and educational in its character. Hamerling, Anzengruber and many other literary friends pledged their coöperation. The first issue of the *Heimgarten* — the name given to the new publication — appeared October 1, 1876. During its long and honorable career the periodical has been the most ready and most effective platform from which our author has addressed his countrymen, and indeed German-speaking people everywhere, on questions of the day, whether literary, ethical, social, educational, or religious. Most of his works appeared in the publication before they were gathered up in book form.

Rosegger found another life companion in the person of Anna Knaur, to whom he was married May 4, 1879. Their happy home life enabled the poet to give his utmost to his literary labors. These he performed during the winter months at Graz, the capital of Styria, while the summer months were passed at Krieglach and the surrounding country. He tells us that a kind fate had given him annually six months of earth-life (Erdenleben) in the city, and six months of paradise in the country. The lure of his native region was too strong to be resisted. It was there that his most spontaneous and successful work was done.

Almost all his life Rosegger has borne the burden of delicate health, if not of serious sickness. More than once his strength and vitality seemed to be permanently exhausted. Business cares, overwork and harsh, vilifying attacks from his ecclesiastical "friends," conspired to rob him of that peace of mind without which physical well-being is well-nigh impossible. Yet, despite these hindrances, Rosegger gained an enviable reputation as a lecturer or public reader as he made his literary creations live and have the fullness of their being throughout the length and breadth of German-speaking lands.

Rosegger, though nominally an adherent of the Catholic Church, is, in many of his profoundest convictions, uncompromisingly Protestant. He refuses to bow to ecclesiastical authority and, consequently, he has been an easy mark for over-zealous ultra-montane pamphleteers. Thus, for example, he never accepted the dogma of papal infallibility, nor does he allow the claims of the Church of being the only one saving Church. In still other fundamentals, both of doctrine and practice, he is at variance with the Church of his earlier years. And yet reverence for his parents and a partiality for ritualistic symbolism enables him to remain in the Roman Communion, though he freely recognizes the value and beauty of Evangelical Christianity.

A signal evidence of his broadmindedness is his activity in every cause that promises to uplift men. Thus, when in 1899, the Protestants at Mürzzuschlag were casting about for means to build a church, Rosegger, by issuing an appeal in the public press in Germany and Austria, secured some seventy thousand crowns for the undertaking. The contributions came so generously and so rapidly that in less than a year after his plea had gone forth, the Heilands-Kirche (Church of Our Saviour) was dedicated. It is in this church that four of his grown-up children have embraced the reformed faith, not only with his consent, but with his approval.

Again, when his former fellow-townsmen at Alpel, though greatly reduced in numbers and material means, felt the need of better schooling for their children, it was Rosegger who was instrumental in providing the means to build and equip a school most thoroughly suited to their needs. Our poet takes immense satisfaction in having been permitted to provide educational advantages for the children of the hills over which he, the " Waldbauernbub," roamed in his poverty and ignorance.

But Rosegger's interest in popular education was not confined to the needs of his home district. On the contrary, by pen and word and deed, he has labored long and persistently for the education and training of the masses. Time and again does he recur, in his writings, to a consideration of fundamental pedagogical problems. He insists that the aim and goal of all sound education is to give the child opportunities for self-realization and happiness by developing in him a capacity to enter largely and fully into practical social activities, and thus to adjust himself to the life about him. As to concrete educational achievements, nothing proves more conclusively what a power Rosegger has come to be in Austrian national life than that in 1909–10 he should have succeeded, within eight months, to bring together by popular subscription the sum of two million crowns for subsidizing German schools in Bohemia, Galicia, the Tyrol, and other provinces of the dual monarchy particularly endangered by Slavic and Italian expansion.

The last twenty years have been to Rosegger a continuous upward march of successes, literary and otherwise. Exceptionally happy in his domestic relations, simple and unostentatious in his thought and conduct, he lives for his art and the well-being of his fellows. " To live and write, are synonymous terms with me," he says of himself. Essentially still the nature-poet who leaped into celebrity from the tailor's bench, he has added to his art what culture and refinement and knowledge can offer. He has thrown himself into the whirl of time, he understands the storm and stress of modern days and conflicts and — offers his solution: a return to the simpler life, a coming nearer to nature's heart. This solution he urges with utmost insistence. In a profound sense the poet and story writer is a preacher, a sociologist and moralist. His *The Earth and the Fullness Thereof, Light Eternal, Jacob the Last of His Race*, are profoundly sociological.

To an author so gifted and so active in the cause of humanity recognition and honors could not fail to come. The Austrian order of the Iron Crown was conferred upon Rosegger in 1898. In 1903 he was given the degree of Doctor of Philosophy by the University of Heidelberg. Ten years later, on the occasion of his seventieth birthday* the University of Vienna paid him a similar tribute. He accepted these honors unabashed, having passed, as he said, "through the hard school of life." The world knows that he has stood the test. He has sought the good and right and beautiful with all his soul. Upon his seventieth birthday all German-speaking countries celebrated the poet's worth, doing homage to his genius and labors. He is enthroned in the German heart — a *Volksdichter* in the highest and best sense of the term. His readers find themselves in hearty accord with Richard Voss' lines, addressing Rosegger:

"Du, der du aus dem Volke kamst, des Volkes Leiden auf dich nahmst,
Dein Dichterwort wird nicht verwehen, so lang der Steyrer Berge stehen.†

As is evident even to the casual observer, Rosegger's art lies in the ability to reproduce for his readers remarkably realistic and vivid pictures of his Styrian Alpine world with its scenic beauty and its simple, rugged nature-types

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* July 31, 1913. Upon this occasion Rosegger's Leipzig publisher, Staackmann, honored himself and the author by making a free gift of one thousand copies of *The Forest Schoolmaster* to the schools and benevolent public institutions of Styria.

† Of Common Folk the son thou art,
Their sorrows burden thy great heart,
Thy message, poet, it will stand
As long as Alp in Styrian land.

1. ROSEGGER'S BIRTHPLACE, KRIEGLACH, STYRIA
2. ROSEGGER'S VILLA, KRIEGLACH, STYRIA

of humanity. No doubt the poet had good reasons for naming one of his books, *Idyls of a Vanishing World.* The Rosegger world is passing. So much the more need to catch and fix that world in literature, untouched as it was by modernisms — industrial, economic, social, political, religious. Much of his best work is avowedly autobiographical: *Forest Home*, *When I was still Young*, *Heidepeter's Gabriel*, and others. They are naïvely direct and seemingly artless depictions of the simple life, the joys and sorrows, the humble circle of activities, the straitened circumstances of the "Waldbauernhaus." In still other books Rosegger invites us to accompany him on his wanderings during his vacation days, e. g., *My Vacation Rambles;* or he relates the inevitable struggle and readjustment, both within and without, which city life forced upon him, e. g., *Out in the World.* His religious life and experiences, his most mature and mellow reflections on matters of faith and things unseen are laid down in *My Heaven* and in *I. N. R. I., or the Glad Tidings of a Poor Sinner*, while in *Good Comrades* we have his reminiscences and impressions of some of his literary contemporaries: Anzengruber, Auerbach, and others.

But even when Rosegger treats of non-personal themes, as for example in *The Forest Schoolmaster*, *The Earth and the Fullness Thereof*, *Light Eternal* or *Jacob the Last of His Race*, one is constantly brought face to face with the poet's material and spiritual inheritance. His ancestry speaks through him, his fellow countrymen act through him, his native hills and forests sing through him, expressing the ever changing moods of nature. He has watched the sunshine and the shadows, the blooming-time, big with promise of plenty and the destroying storms of hail and fire and flood. The vast mountain peaks are aglow or cast their blue shadows on the distant lowlands. The stately forests are musical with an eternal silence, hillside and meadow and forest harbor myriad forms of life — all children of the Eternal Mother. The canopy of sky and clouds or the nightly firmament, the fantastic play of light and shade, of snow and avalanche, of icy crag or precipitous rock-wall — all are made to yield their literary and emotional contents to the poet and reader.

The people, the folk whom Rosegger places in the midst of these surroundings, are primitive types, naïve, unlettered, rude if you please, yet strong and virile, fresh from the hand of nature. They are inured to privation and toil, unremunerative though it be; they are fatalistic, perhaps even stolid and taciturn. Their faults and their virtues are elemental, "natural," unconventional; they are impulsive, hard-headed, revengeful, passionate, but they are also warm-hearted, generous, neighborly, truthful, and frugal. Their religion is decidedly anthropomorphic, not unmixed with superstition. Children of the soil they are, every one of them, veritable nature products in every fibre of their being.

Rosegger's literary ideals and methods are in sharp contrast with the crass naturalism of many of his contemporaries. Though always profoundly ethical and purposeful, he cannot be classed with the *Tendenzschriftsteller*. The artist and psychologist in him will not give way to the moralist or the preacher. "Without haste and without rest" he delves into the worth of human endeavor and discovers and evaluates it, wherever and in whatever guise it may appear. His writings are characterized by a naïve simplicity, by a clear insight into motives and action, by a firm grip on the elemental realities, whether in nature or man. He has a sure and sympathetic touch when he gives form and substance to his memories, his observations and experiences. Wherever we put ourselves in touch with Peter Rosegger, whether in his life or his literary labors, we are impressed by his health of soul, his "sweet reasonableness," his singleness of purpose, and his large faith in Man and Nature and God.

PETER ROSEGGER

THE FOREST SCHOOLMASTER* (1875)

TRANSLATED BY FRANCES E. SKINNER

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INTRODUCTORY

“ROAD TO WINKELSTEG.” These words on the sign-post. But the rain has nearly washed out the old-fashioned letters, and the post itself totters in the wind.

Round about stretches a rugged pine-forest; on the heights above are a few ancient larches, their bare branches reaching out to the sky. In the depths of a defile is a roaring torrent which the old mountain road frequently crosses by means of half-sunken wooden bridges, leading to an opening where the wanderer from peopled regions catches the first glimpse of the glaciers.

Here the Wildbach comes rushing down, and the road, after traversing wastes and wildernesses, turns toward more peaceful woodlands, at last leading to the habitations of man. Along the river-bed extends a dry rocky ravine, across which storms have thrown pine-trunks, bleached from long exposure to the sun.

At the parting of the ways, upon a high rock stands a tall wooden cross, with triple crossbars, upon which are carved the instruments of martyrdom of the holy passion. The wood is weather-beaten and overgrown with moss. Close by is the post with the arm and the inscription: “Road to Winkelsteg.”

This sign points to the neglected stony path leading toward the narrow valley, beyond which lie the snow-fields. On the farthest heights, above the gently rising, snow-covered peaks, towers a gray cone, about whose summit cloud flakes love to gather.

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* Permission G. P. Putnam Sons, New York.

I seated myself upon a block of stone near the cross and gazed up at the gray peak.

On rising I perceived that my shadow was already lengthening, and it was uncertain how great a distance still lay between me and that remotest and smallest of all villages, Winkelsteg.

I walked rapidly, taking little heed of my surroundings. I only noticed that the wilderness became more and more imposing. I heard deer belling in the forest, I heard vultures whistling through the air. The sky darkened, although too early for nightfall. A storm was gathering over the rocky peaks. First a half smothered rumbling was heard, then a thundering and rolling, as if all the rocks and masses of ice in the high mountains were crashing a thousand times against each other. The great trees swayed, and in the broad leaves of a maple already rattled the big icy drops.

With these few drops the storm passed. Farther up it must have been more severe, for suddenly through the gorge a wild torrent, bringing with it earth, stones, ice, and bits of wood, rushed toward me. I saved myself from falling by clambering up the slope, and with great difficulty made my way forward.

The whole country was now wrapped in fog, which descended from the branches of the pines to the damp heather on the ground.

As twilight approached and the defile widened a little, I reached a narrow valley, the length of which I could not measure on account of the fog. The grass was covered with hailstones. The brook had overflowed its banks and torn away the bridge which led to the opposite shore, where through the gray mist shone the wooden roofs of a few houses and a little white church. The air was frosty and cold. I called across to the men who were trying to catch the blocks of wood and regulate the current. They shouted back that they could not help me, and that I must wait until the water had lowered again.

One might wait the whole night for such a torrent to subside; so, taking the risk, I attempted to wade through the stream. But those on the other side motioned to me warningly. Soon a tall, black-bearded man appeared with a long pole, by means of which he swung himself across to me. Close to the bank he piled a few stones, and upon these laid a board which the others had shoved to him. Then taking me by the hand, he cautiously led me over the tottering bridge to the opposite bank.

While we were swaying over the water, the sound of the Ave-bells reached our ears, and the men reverently removed their hats.

The tall, dark man walked with me over the crackling hailstones up to the village.

It consisted of three or four wooden houses, a few huts, some smoking charcoal-pits, and the little church.

In front of one of the larger houses, before the door of which lay a broad stepping-stone, worn by many feet, my companion paused and said: "Will you stop here, sir? I am the Winkel innkeeper." With these words he pointed to the house, as if that were his real self.

Entering the guest-room, I was met by the landlady who took my traveling-bag and damp overcoat and, bringing me a pair of straw shoes, she said: "Off with the wet leather and on with the slippers; be quick; a wet shoe on the foot runs for the doctor." Very soon I was sitting dry and comfortable by the large table under the *Haus Altar* and some shelves, upon which stood a row of gaily painted earthen- and china-ware. Upon a rack were a number of bottles, and I was asked at once if I would take some brandy.

On requesting some wine instead mine host replied: "There hasn't been a drop in the cellar since the house was built, but I can give you some excellent cider."

As I accepted his offer, he started for the cellar, but his wife stepped hastily up to him and, taking the key out of his hand, said: "Go, Lazarus, and snuff the candle for the gentleman; and be quick about it, Lazarus; you'll get your little drop soon enough."

He came back to the table grumbling, snuffed the wick of the tallow candle, looked at me for awhile, and finally asked: "The gentleman is possibly our new schoolmaster? — No? Then your way leads up the Graue Zahn (Gray Tooth Peak)? That you will hardly do tomorrow. No one has climbed it this summer. That must be done in the early autumn; at other times there's no depending on the weather. Indeed, how one does speculate about things; now I thought you might be the new schoolmaster. Hardly any one finds his way up here who doesn't belong to the place, and we are expecting him every day. The old one has run away from us; — have you heard nothing about it?"

" So, Lazarus, you're having a fine chat with the gentleman," said the landlady in a coaxing tone to her husband, as she set the cider and at the same time the evening soup before me.

" You have an excellent little wife," I said to my landlord.

" There isn't another little wife so good-hearted and faithful," he murmured as if to himself; he finished the sentence with a sullen growl.

Observing his painful mood, I tried to help him out of it.

" So you say the old schoolmaster has run away?" At this the landlord raised his head: " One can't exactly say he has run away; he had nothing to complain of here. I should think one who had been school-teacher, and I-don't-know-what-all, in Winkelsteg for fifty years, wouldn't run away like a horse-thief in the fifty-first."

" School-teacher here fifty years!" I exclaimed.

" He was school-teacher, doctor, bailiff, and for awhile even our pastor."

"And half a fool in the bargain!" called a man from a neighboring table, where a number of grimy fellows, mostly woodcutters and charcoal-burners, were sitting before their brandy-glasses. "Aye! aye!" cried the same voice; " he would sit outside there by the juniper bush muttering to himself, hours at a time; he must have been trying to teach the bullfinches to sing by note. Whenever he spied a gay butterfly, he would flounder after it the livelong day; — a herder lad couldn't have been more childish.

" The devil has taken him, the old sinner!" growled another voice from the darkest corner of the room, by the big stove.

" You mustn't, you mustn't talk so!" said one of the charcoal men. " You should remember that the old man had snow-white hair!"

" Yes, and horns under it," rang out from the corner by the stove; " perhaps no one knew him so well, the old sneak, as Schorschl! Do you think he didn't connive with the great men so that none of us could win in the lottery? How then did Kranabetsepp make a *tern* the second week after the schoolmaster went away? To be sure, the hunchbacked hypocrite had money enough, but he buried it, so that if he didn't need it himself the poor couldn't use it either. Oh — perhaps one might tell other stories, too, if certain people were not in the room."

"Oh, of course the brandy-distillers couldn't endure the old man," said one of the charcoal-burners. Then turning to me: "My dear sir, he meant well! God comfort his poor soul! He played the organ Christmas eve, but Christmas morning there were no bells rung for prayers. In the night he had told Reiter-Peter — he is our musician, you know — to take charge of the music on Christmas day; — that was his last word, and the schoolmaster was seen no more. By St. Anthony, how we hunted for the man! It was impossible to trace him; the snow was as hard as stone everywhere, even in the forest. All Winkelsteg was up searching the woods far and near, and even the roads in the country outside."

The man was silent; a shrug of the shoulders and a motion of the hand indicated that they had not found him.

"And thus it happened that we Winkelstegers have no schoolmaster," said the landlord.

"As for myself, I don't need one; I never have learned anything, and never shall now. I manage anyway. But I see very well that there must be a schoolmaster. Therefore, we peasants of the parish and the wood-cutters have agreed that we must have a new —"

"I know what I think," answered one of the charcoal-burners, "and I say the same, just exactly the same, as Wurzentoni. The old schoolmaster, says he, knew a bit more than other people; a good bit more. Wurzentoni — not only once, ten, nay a hundred times — has seen the schoolmaster praying out of a little book in which were all sorts of sayings, magic and witchcraft signs. If the schoolmaster had died anywhere in the woods, says Wurzentoni, then some one would have found the body; if the devil had taken him, then his cloak would have been left behind; for the cloak, says Wurzentoni, is innocent; the devil has no power over that, not the least! Something altogether different has happened, my friends! I'm not saying anything bad about the schoolmaster, not I; I shouldn't know what to say, indeed I shouldn't!"

So the time passed, until the landlady came to me and said: "We can give you a good bed up in the attic; but I will tell you at once, sir, that the wind has carried away a few shingles from the roof today, and so it drips through a little. In the schoolhouse above here, is a very nice, comfortable room, which has already been arranged for the new teacher; it heats well, too, and we have the key; for my old man is the Winkel Magistrate, and has charge of it. Now, if you wouldn't mind sleeping in the schoolhouse, I would advise you to do it. Indeed it's not in the least gloomy, and it's very quiet and clean. I think I should like to live there the year round."

So I chose the schoolhouse instead of the attic. Not long afterward, a maid with a lantern accompanied me out into the dark, rainy night, through the village to the church beyond the graveyard, on the edge of which stood the schoolhouse. The hall was bare, and the shadows from the lantern chased each other up and down the walls.

Then we entered a little room, where, in the tile stove, a bright fire was crackling. My companion placed a candle on the table, threw back the brown cover of the bed, and opened a drawer of the bureau, that I might put away my things. All at once she exclaimed: "No, really, we should all of us be ashamed of ourselves; here are these scraps still scattered about!" She hastily seized an armful of sheets of paper, which were lying in confusion in the drawer. "I'll take care of you soon enough, you bits of trash; the stove is the place for you!"

"Stop, stop," I interrupted, "perhaps there are things there that the new teacher can use."

She threw the papers back into the drawer with an impatient gesture.

"The gentleman can put on the old schoolmaster's nightcap," said the girl roguishly, laying a blue-striped nightcap on the pillow. She then gave me some advice in regard to the doorkey, and said: "So, *in Gottesnamen,* now I will go!" and with this she left me.

She closed the outside door, and, turning the key of the inner, I was alone in the room of the missing schoolmaster.

I looked around me in the room. There was a worm-eaten table and a brown chest. On the wall hung an old clock; the figures were entirely effaced from the dial under which the short pendulum swung busily backward and forward, as if trying to hasten faster and faster out of a sad past into a better future.

I went to bed, and lay there thinking, not in the least realizing what manner of man had built this house, and rested in this place before me.

The fire in the stove crackled fainter and fainter and was dying out. Outside the rain pattered, yet such a silence lay over all that

I seemed to hear the breathing of the night. I was just falling asleep, when all at once, quite close above me, began a cheerful sound, and several times in succession the call of the quail rang out loud and merrily. It was deceptively like the beautiful voice of the bird in the grainfield. It was the old clock, which in such a strange way had announced to me the eleventh hour.

And the sweet tones led my thoughts and dreams out into the sunny grainfields, to the waving stalks, to the bright blue flowers, to the fluttering butterflies, and thus I fell asleep that night in the mysterious schoolhouse in Winkelsteg.

As the call of the quail had lulled me to sleep, so it awakened me again. It was the sixth hour of the morning.

The mild warmth from the stove filled the room; the walls and ceiling were as though bathed in moonlight. It was the month of July, and the sun must have already risen. I arose and drew back one of the blue window-curtains. The large panes were wet and gray; here and there a pearly drop, freeing itself, rolled down through the countless bubbles, leaving behind a narrow path, through which the dark-brown church roof could be seen.

I had abandoned all thought of the Alpine climb for that day. While dressing, I looked at the mechanism of the old Black Forest clock, which, by means of two flat bits of wood beating against each other, so strikingly reproduced the ringing note of the quail. Afterward I rummaged awhile among the papers in the drawer, as it was still too early for breakfast. I noticed that, excepting the drawings, calculations, and those papers which served as an album for the plants, all the written sheets were of the same size, and numbered with red ink. I tried to arrange the leaves, and occasionally cast a glance at their contents. It seemed to be a kind of diary, having reference to Winkelsteg. But the writings were so full of peculiar expressions and irregularly-formed sentences that study and some translation would be necessary to make them intelligible.

This task, however, did not discourage me; for here I hoped to find an account of the isolated Alpine village, and perhaps even some facts concerning the life of the lost schoolmaster. While busily arranging the papers and thoroughly absorbed in my work, I suddenly discovered a thick gray sheet upon which was written in large red letters: " THE SCHOOLMASTER'S STORY."

So, in a way, I had put a book together, and the leaf with the red letters I had laid by chance on top as a title.

Not long afterward, I was sitting at my breakfast in the inn. It consisted of a bowl of milk, flavored with roasted rye-meal, which is the Winkelsteg coffee.

And now — what were my plans?

I told the cheerful landlady of my intention to wait for favorable weather in Winkelsteg, to live in the little room at the schoolhouse, and to read the records of the schoolmaster — " If I may have permission."

" Oh dear, yes; of course you may!" she exclaimed; " whom could you disturb up there, sir? And no one else would look at those old papers — no one that I know of! So you may select those that you want. The new schoolmaster will bring all such things with him. But I hardly think one will come now. Certainly you may stay, and I will see that the room is kept nice and warm."

So I went up to the schoolhouse again, and entered the little room. It was already in order, with a fresh fire crackling in the stove. Through the shining windows I could see the gloomy day and the heavy fog hanging over the forest; but that only made the room seem the more cosy and homelike.

The papers, which I had arranged in the morning, rough, gray and closely written, I now took from the drawer, and seated myself before the well-scoured table at the window, that the daylight might fall on them in a friendly way.

The first sheet tells nothing and everything; it contains three words: " The Schoolmaster's Story."

THE SCHOOLMASTER'S STORY

"Dear God!

"I greet Thee, and write Thee a piece of news. My father died today. He has been ill two years. Everybody says it is most fortunate. My aunt Lies says so too. They have carried father away now. The body goes to the mortuary, the soul through purgatory, then up to heaven. And now, dear God, I have a great favor to ask. Please send an angel to meet my father and show him the way. I will enclose my christening-money for the angel; there are three groschen. I am sure my father will be happy in heaven, and please take him directly to my mother. Many greetings to Thee, dear God, and to my father and mother.

"Andreas Erdmann.

"Salzburg. In the year of our Lord 1797.
Apostle Simon's Day."

This letter has been preserved by chance, so I will begin with it. I remember the day still. In my great innocence, I was about to wrap the three groschen in the paper, when my Aunt Lies came in, read the letter with her glassy eyes, and clapping her hands together, cried: "What a stupid boy!" Hastily taking my christening-money, she ran away, telling my story all over the house, from the porter's room up to the third floor, where lived an old umbrella-maker. Our room was soon filled with neighbors, curious to see the stupid boy.

They laughed at me until I began to cry. Then they laughed still more provokingly. The old umbrella-maker, with his sky-blue apron, was also there. Raising his hand, he said: "My friends, this is foolish laughter; perhaps the child is wiser than any of you. Come to me, little one; your good father died today; your aunt is far too clever, and her house too small for you, my wee lad. Come with me, and I will teach you to make umbrellas."

Oh, how my aunt scolded at that! But I believe that in her heart of hearts she was glad; for I went up the two flights of stairs with the old man.

At the time of my father's death, I must have been in my seventh year. I only know that, up to my fifth year, my parents lived in the forest, by the side of a lake. Rocky mountains, woods, and water inclosed the place, and here my father held an official position in the salt-works. When my mother died, his health began to fail, and since he was obliged to give up his work, we moved to his well-to-do sister's in town. He wished to take an easier situation there, that he might compensate his sister, who was the very pattern of economy, for food and lodging. But he was ill a long time, and, aside from teaching me to read and write, he did nothing. And so it came about as I have already written.

I remained with the old man in the third story a number of years. Like him, I, too, wore a sky-blue apron. In that way one saves clothes. We made nothing but blue and red umbrellas, which we carried in big bundles to the fairs and sold. Opening one large umbrella over our wares, our booth was ready. If business flourished, so that we could sell the booth itself, we went to the inn for a good dinner; otherwise we made the wares up in bundles, and carried them home again, there satisfying our hunger with a warm soup.

When my master was over seventy years old, he suddenly became weary of the blue and red canvas; he was forced to seek another tent — he died — died and left me, as my father had done.

I was his heir. A dozen and a half umbrellas were my inheritance. These I packed up one day and carried to the fair, where we had previously been successful in selling our goods.

Suddenly, at noon, a storm comes up; the people are as though swept from the market-place, and with them my umbrellas; a single one being left with which to cover myself and my hard-earned money. Just then a gentleman, splashing through the puddles, hurries across the square to buy my umbrella.

"Then I should have none for myself," I say.

"I have seen many a shoemaker going barefoot," laughs the man; "but, see here, youngster, we will find some way to arrange it. Are you from town?"

"Yes," I answer, "but no shoemaker." "That does not matter. There is no carriage to be had; so we will walk together, boy, and use the same umbrella; afterward you may either keep it or have the money for it."

Thinking to myself, it were a thousand pities to spoil his fine coat, I assented to his proposal.

So I, the poor umbrella-maker's boy, walked into town arm-in-arm with the grand gentleman. On the way we chatted with one another. He understood drawing me out, and after awhile I had told him my whole history, with all its circumstances.

The rain ceased, and as we approached the town I tried to fall behind, as I thought it unseemly to walk through the streets with such a finely-dressed man. But, in a very friendly way, he invited me to keep beside him, at last taking me into his house, offering me food and drink, and finally asking me to remain with him altogether; he was a bookseller, and in need of an assistant.

Unskilled even in umbrella-making, and not knowing what occupation to take up next, I accepted the situation.

Fortune smiled upon me in those days. I was pleased with my master; he had fully recompensed me for the shelter of my umbrella; but as an assistant I was not a success. I was filled with curiosity; I wished to examine the contents of every book which I took into my hand. The placing and putting the volumes in order was entirely forgotten.

My master surprised me one day by saying: "Boy, you are useless for the outside of books; you must devote yourself to the inside. I think it would be wise to send you to school."

"Oh, if you only could! That is just what I have been secretly longing for."

"We shall probably succeed in placing you in the Academy, where, if honest and industrious, you will advance rapidly, and before you know it — hear yourself called: Doctor Erdmann!"

On hearing this, I became greatly excited, and still more so when my master had accomplished his purpose. I entered the Academy and plunged straight into the inside of books. But in school one has only the dullest kind; the interesting ones are all forbidden, and I was forced to crowd my brain with subjects which appealed to me neither from without nor from within.

My bills of fare through the week were varied. My dinners I took: Mondays with a teacher; Tuesdays with a baron; Wednesdays with a merchant; Thursdays with a schoolmate, the son of a rich manufacturer; Fridays with an old lieutenant; Saturdays with some very poor people in an attic, and in payment I gave the children lessons in arithmetic; and Sundays I was with my protector, the bookseller. And I have also worn clothing given me by all these people.

So it went on for a number of years. Then my Tuesday's host engaged me as tutor to his little son. My prospects now seemed brighter. I gave up dining with my attic friends, but continued the instruction of their children.

Although I entered into my studies with great eagerness at first, they soon became distasteful to me. I had always supposed that in an Academy one could grasp both heaven and earth, and learn to know the beautiful harmony of everything therein.

While I was in the institution, two scholars committed suicide. "Very well," said the Director of the school, "he who does not bend must break." And that was the funeral sermon.

On the day following one of these sad occurrences, it happened to be my turn to deliver a Latin oration, before my teachers and fellow-students, on the character of the Roman kings. I came directly from the bier of my unfortunate comrade and with excited brain mounted the platform. "I will compare the Romans with the Germans," I cried; " the old tyrants enslaved the body, the new ones enslave the intellect. Outside there in the dark chamber, deserted and dishonored, lies one hunted to death, not the only victim who has sought refuge in the grave. . . ."

I may have said a few words more; but they then approached, and smilingly led me down from the platform. " Erdmann is out of his mind," said one of the masters; " he should not speak in German but in Latin. The next time he will do better."

Nearly crazed, I staggered home. Heinrich, the clothmaker's son, my table and school companion, hurried after me. " What have you done, Andreas? What have you said?"

" Too little, too little," I replied.

" That will be your ruin, Andreas; return at once and ask pardon for your offense."

I laughed in my friend's face. Moved, he grasped me by the hand saying: " By Heaven, you have spoken the truth, and for that very reason they will never forgive you for those words!"

" Nor do I care," I replied defiantly.

Heinrich walked beside me in silence. Finally he said: " You must learn wisdom, Andreas; but now go and compose yourself."

My hand trembles as I write this; yet it was all over long ago.

One year previous to this occurrence, I had through my friend Heinrich obtained the position of tutor in the aristocratic family of Baron von Schrankenheim.

My task was not heavy. I had one boy to teach and prepare for the *Hochschule.* Here I fared well and I was no longer obliged to beg my dinners at different tables. My pupil, Hermann, a fine, studious boy, was fond of me, as was also his sister, an extraordinarily beautiful girl — and I was her devoted friend.

But, as the time passed, it became oppressive and uncomfortable for me in the wealthy household. Always somewhat timid and self-conscious, I now felt my position more keenly than ever, for they were all aware of my poverty, and even the servants often slipped little presents into my hand.

But my pupil possessed delicacy of feeling, and was happy and confidential with me; and the girl — oh, what a beautiful child she was!

I would often find myself thinking: What a blissful thing to be beautiful and rich! My heart was hot; I dreamed of " flowers and stars and her eyes." Whose eyes? Then springing up in alarm — God, what am I doing? Andreas, Andreas, what will come of it?

I was eighteen years old at that time. In my perplexity I one day confided in my friend Heinrich, who had always understood me better than any one, and he counseled me to conquer myself, telling me that nearly all young people were afflicted with the same malady, which would soon pass. Hardly five years older than I, and this was his advice.

Left alone in my trouble, I decided that, although young in years, I would consider the matter calmly — notwithstanding the advice of clever people. Of my poverty I was well aware; my humble ancestry impelled me to make something of myself. He was right; in the presence of my teachers I should control myself, tame my obstinate will, and with perseverance and industry submit to the institution. Notwithstanding the injustice that must be endured, in a few years I should become Doctor, or a most learned Master of Arts.

And a Master of Arts may surely ask the hand of a baron's daughter. Like a man, I will then go and woo her.

However, keeping my intentions secret, I devoted myself earnestly to my studies, becoming one of the first among my fellow-students. I progressed rapidly and drew nearer and nearer to my goal. I already saw the day when as a man of dignity and standing I might pay court to the maiden. The family seemed fond of me, and the Baron, not over-proud of his aristocracy, would not object to a scholar for a son-in-law. I was indeed most fortunate and happy. Then the final examinations were taken, and my professors — rejected me.

I went directly home, and appeared before the father of my pupil: " Sir, I thank you for all your kindness to me. I cannot remain longer in your house."

Looking at me in great astonishment, he asked, "Where are you going?"

" I do not know, but I must leave this town at once."

The good man told me that I was over-excited and ill. What had happened to me, might happen to others as well; he would see that I was cared for, and in the quiet of his home I would soon recover, and in a year pass the examination successfully.

But I persisted in my determination to go away; I was well aware that the cause of my failure was the German speech on the Latin kings, and for this reason I should never be allowed to pass the examination. Heinrich was right.

" Very well, my obstinate friend," concluded the nobleman, " then I release you."

Of whom should I take leave? Of my young pupil? Of the young lady? Lord, lead me not into temptation! She was still so young. She dismissed me pleasantly, and in a friendly manner.

Then I went to Heinrich: "I thank you a thousand times for thy love, my faithful friend. Would that I could reward you for it. You know what has happened. There is nothing left for me but to go away. When I have accomplished something worthy I will come back and repay you."

I was very young when I set my foot into the wide world. Heinrich accompanied me a long distance. At parting he forced me to accept his ready money. Heart to heart we swore one another eternal faithfulness, then we separated.

O Heinrich! Thou good heart, true as gold, thou hast kept thy word with me. And I have repaid thee badly — yes, *infernally,* Heinrich!

* * * * * * * * *

[Erdmann, the old master, is thus seen to have drained the cup of bitterness, grief and disappointment. The daughter of Freiherr von Schrankenheim, in whose family he had been a private tutor, had aroused within him the maddening passion. Talented and gifted and filled with all the youthful ideal of liberty and humanity, he had rebelled against the petty tyranny of his scholastic superiors and, as a consequence, had failed in his examinations. The bridge that might have crossed the chasm between him and the Fräulein was thus ruthlessly destroyed. To deaden the fiery tumult within he threw himself into the yet fierier tumult of war. At the battle of Leipzig he unwittingly killed his bosom-friend, Heinrich. In his despair he sought to flee from the world. Preparatory to his voluntary exile and withdrawal from his fellow-men he visits his father's grave where he meets his former patron and friend, Herr von Schrankenheim.]

In *Peters-Friedhof* my father lay buried. I wished to see the mound before seeking a cave for myself in some deserted ravine of the forest. And as I lay upon the cold, frozen earth, once more able to weep my heart out over my life, so young and so unfortunate, a gentleman appeared walking among the graves; he asked what troubled me, then with a gesture of astonishment exclaimed: "Erdmann, you here? And how changed you are! Gone scarcely four years and almost unrecognizable!"

Herr von Schrankenheim, the father of my former pupil, was standing before me.

Walking up and down with him among the graves, I told him all. With wet eyes he pressed money into my hand: "There, get yourself some new clothes and then come to my house. Become a hermit!—that is no career for a fine young lad. You must overcome your despondency and begin life anew."

On his invitation I went to his house with great dread, for there was one folly which I had not yet conquered.

Herr von Schrankenheim presented his son to me. He had already become a tall, elegant gentleman. With his hands behind his back, he made me a silent bow, and after a little left us. Then his father, conducting me into his study, bade me take a seat in the softest easy-chair.

"Erdmann," he began after awhile, "are you really in earnest in your desire to live a life of seclusion in the wilderness?"

"That is the best thing for me," I answered. "I am worthless among people who live in joy and pleasure; in wandering and confusion, the few years of my youth have tossed me about from one land to another torn by the devastation of war. Sir, I know the world and have enough of it."

"You are hardly in your twenty-fourth year, and not yet at the height of your powers, and you wish to give up the service you might render your fellowmen?"

At that I listened attentively; the words impressed me.

"If you think that up to the present time you have only been the author of evil, why do you wish to run away without giving the world and the community the good which surely slumbers in rich measure within you?"

I rose from my chair. "Sir, show me, then, the way to do it!"

"Very well," said Herr von Schrankenheim, "possibly I can, if you will sit down again and listen to me. Erdmann, I know of a distant and real hermitage, in which one could serve humanity and perhaps do something great for the community. Far from here, up in the Alps, are stretches of large forests between rocky heights, where one will find shepherds, hunters, wood-cutters, and charcoal-burners, along with others, who, for one reason or another, have sought refuge there, and now eke out an existence, in lawful or unlawful ways. It is true, churlish men are among them, whose hearts are gnawed by misfortune or something worse. They have neither priest nor doctor nor school-teacher in their vicinity; they are quite deserted and isolated and have only their own helplessness and misguided natures upon which to depend. I am the owner of the forest. For a long time I have had the intention of sending some one to this region who should guide the inhabitants a little, assist them with good advice, and teach the children to read and write. The man might make himself very useful. And, indeed, it is not so easy to find one for the place; unless it were some one who, weary of the world, would like to live in seclusion, yet work for mankind. Erdmann, what do you think of that?"

At these words I felt impelled to seize his hand and say: "I am the man for it; dissatisfied with the condition of things in this old world, I will found a new one in the wilderness. A new school, a new parish — a new life. Let me go today!" So the fire was not quite extinguished; sparks sometimes fly from ashes.

"Cold weather is at hand," continued the Baron. "Remain in my house for the winter and give the matter due consideration and when summer comes, if my offer still pleases you, then go to the forest."

The rustling of a dress in the adjoining room filled me with alarm, and I finally took my leave, begging permission to go away for the winter, with the promise to return with the swallows and accept his proposal.

He would not be dissuaded from giving me the "means" for the coming season, so I arose to go. In the front hall I caught a glimpse of a woman's figure, past which I glided like a spectre.

One day I wandered as far as the woodland by the lake where my childhood and my mother lie buried. And here in this place I rented a small room for the winter. I often climbed the snowy slopes and, standing under moss-covered trees, was impressed with the feeling of having once stood there with my mother and father. I often walked over the frozen lake thinking of the days when I had crossed the gentle waves in a boat at my parents' side, watching the sunset glow on the mountains and listening to the song echoes of an Alpine shepherdess resounding on the cliffs. My father and mother also sang. That was long ago, long ago.

I have lain in prison in France; I have wandered ill and dying over the deserts of Russia; and now I am living here in this dear, precious little room by the lake. All would have been well, the time of poverty forgotten like the image in a dream — only it should never have dawned, that unhappy day in Saxonland — that will haunt me forever. Heinrich, I do not fear thy ghost; only come to me once, that I may say to thee: "It happened in blindness; I cannot alter it now; I will wipe it out with my own life." . . .

Now it is well. I have searched myself for many days; I have reviewed my former life and written it out here in a few words, that I may always keep it the more clearly before my eyes when new perplexities and troubles overtake me. In fact I think I have endured and am still able to endure the school of life better than the school of books and dead precepts. I have acquired understanding and have become calm. Having carefully considered my experiences and circumstances, my talents and inclinations, I think it no presumption to accept the proposal of Herr von Schrankenheim. Although outwardly still quite young, inwardly I am very old. The advice of an old man will surely be welcome to the dwellers in the forest.

The Feast of St. Anthony of Padua, Salzburg, 1814.

It is settled I am going to the woods. I am equipped and all is ready. The Baron has promised me his assistance in everything. His son Hermann greeted me again with a friendly bow. The young gentleman is a little pale; he is probably very studious. His sister * * * (In the original two lines were here crossed out so many times that they had become entirely illegible.)

They say that my aunt is well. Not wishing to cause her the pain which she would have experienced at my appearance and my undertaking, I did not visit her again. Now they are blowing the post-horn. Farewell, beautiful town.

* * * * * * * * * *

Already three days on the journey. However, this is a pleasanter expedition than the one over the winter steppes. Day before yesterday the green foothills changed into picturesque mountain regions. Yesterday we entered a broad, pleasant valley. Today we are going up and down hill, through woods and ravines and by rocky cliffs. Now the road is becoming narrower and rougher; sometimes it is necessary to alight from the wagon and shove aside the fallen blocks of stone. We see more chamois and deer than people. I was obliged to remain in debt for my night's lodging today. The bank-note which I have with me the people in this region cannot change. I would have given my host something as security, but he assured me if I were to remain in the forest of the Winkel, I could easily send him the money by a messenger who came occasionally from that region. I must return the bank-note and ask for small coin.

On this the fourth day I have been set down. The post-chaise has gone on its way; for a while I still hear the clear horn resounding through the woods, and then all is silent and I sit here beside my bundle in the midst of the wilderness.

Through the ravine flows a stream which they call the Winkel, along which is a footpath. It leads over stones and roots and is sown with hard pine-needles of past years. This road I must travel.

Through the branches yonder I see the gleam of a white plateau; that is a snow-field. And do people live up there?

IN THE WINKEL

So I will write it all out. For whom I do not know. Perhaps for the dear God to whom in my innocence I wrote the letter when my father died. My heart would break could I not talk over all that is unusual and sorrowful in my life. I will tell it to the sheet of paper. Perchance in the future some one may be found to whom I can intrust it, though he but half understand me. You, pure, white leaves, shall now be my friends and share the years which may come to me. Today my hair is still dark, while you are somewhat gray, but you may yet outlive me and become my future generation.

I arrived here on a Saturday. As I stumbled along by the Winkel Waters, I met here and there wood satyrs, brown and hairy, covered with moss and pitch, going about in their fustian smocks. They looked like exiled, withered tree-trunks, seeking for new ground where they might grow and flourish again.

Stopping in front of me, they stared in astonishment or glanced at me threateningly, while they struck fire with tinder and flint for their pipes. Some of them had flashing eyes which sent forth sparks like those from the fire-stones; others very good-naturedly showed me the way. One rough, sturdy fellow, carrying a pack on his back with saws, ax, meal buckets, etc., stepped to one side, as he saw me coming, and murmured, "*Gelobt sei Jesu Christ!*"

"Forever and ever, Amen!" was my answer, which seemed to give him confidence, for he accompanied me a short distance.

At last the valley widens a little. It is a small basin into which flow a number of streams from the different ravines, as well as from the cliffs that rise at my left. These waters form the Winkel. Here a thick log, hewn flat on the upper side, is laid across the brook, forming the path to a frame house standing on the edge of the woods.

This is the forest lodge, the only house of any size in the vicinity. Farther away in the defiles and valleys are the cabins of the shepherds and wood-cutters, and beyond, on the wooded hillsides, where large clearings have been made and charcoal-pits started, are villages of huts for the charcoal-burners.

They call this little valley *Im Winkel.* It still remains almost entirely in its primeval state, excepting the one large house, with its domestic surroundings and the footpath leading up to it.

The forest lodge is also called the Winkel-warden's house. Here I entered and, placing my bundle upon a chest in the hall, seated myself beside it.

The forester was busy with workmen who were settling their accounts and receiving their monthly wages. He was a domineering, red-bearded man, and he dismissed the people somewhat roughly and curtly; but the men bore it good-naturedly and pocketed their money in silence.

The business finished, he rose and stretched his strong limbs, which were clothed in genuine and correct hunter's costume. I now approached, handing him the credentials which I had brought from the owner of the forest.

This document contained everything essential. A nicely furnished room was assigned to me. A sturdy woman who was there to look after and arrange it, according to her own ideas, stopped suddenly before my open door, and with arms akimbo called out loud and shrilly, "*Du lieber Himmel,* is that how a schoolmaster looks?" She had never seen one in her life.

I was soon settled and had all my possessions in order. Politely knocking at my door, the forester then entered my room. Looking at my apartment, he asked, "Does it answer your purpose?"

"Oh, yes, very well," I replied.

"Are you satisfied?"

"Yes, and I hope to be quite contented here."

"Then I trust everything will be all right."

He walked many times up and down over the plank floor, his hands thrust into his trousers' pockets, and finally stopping in front of me, he said:

"Now consider what method you would like to adopt for your work. I leave here tomorrow and come only every Saturday into the Winkel. The remainder of the time I am busy in other localities, and my home is in Holdenschlag, four hours from here by the road. The idea of beginning a school immediately dismiss from your mind, my dear man. First we must manage the old people. They are blockheads, I tell you! And you may as well know at once that we have all kinds of folks in these forests. Nothing very bad can be charged against any one of them, but they have come here from the east and west—for what reason God only knows. They are mostly peasants from the outlying regions, who have fled into the forest to escape military service. There are also fellows among them whom one would hardly like to meet on a dark night. Poachers, every one of them! So long as they only shoot the game of the forest, we let them go about unmolested; that cannot be helped, and the labor of their hands is needed. But if they shoot down a guard, then of course we are obliged to arrest them. The most of them have families, for the most part without the formality of marriage. You will run across men and women who, in all their lives, have never heard a church bell or seen a vestment. You will soon observe what an effect that has upon the people. Try to become acquainted with all these people in whatever way you think best. And if you find that you can exert an influence over them, we will support you in it. You are still quite young, my friend; take care and be sensible! If you think best, take a boy along at first to show you your way about. And if you need anything, apply to me. I wish you well!"

With these words he departed. He, it seems, is now my master; may he also be my protector!

Although it was my first night in the Winkel, I slept soundly on the straw bed. The murmuring of the brook cheered my heart. It was the month of June, but the sun rose late over the forest and looked into my room in a friendly way.

In the morning I wandered out of doors. All is fresh and green and sparkling with dewdrops, while on the wooded heights, as far as the eye can reach in the narrow valley, the bluish sun-web spins itself over the shadowy tree-trunks. Toward the west towers the battlement of rocks above which lie the meadows of the Alm, then rocky cliffs again, and over all stretch the wide, inhospitable fields of snow and ice, glittering like a white plateau.

If I am successful in my task here below, then I will climb sometime up to the glaciers. And above the glaciers towers at last the Graue Zahn, from whose summit, I am told, in the farthest distance can be seen the sea. If I am successful here, then from the high mountain I shall sometime behold the sea.

In war and storm I have rushed over half the world and have seen nothing but dust and stone; now, in the peace of solitude my eyes are opened to nature.

But — poachers, deserters, wild fellows whom one would not like to meet at night! Andreas, that will be no easy task.

PEACE OF THE PRIMEVAL FOREST

I feel contented in the woods. The few people who see me going about in the forest gaze after me, unable to understand why I, a young fellow, should be roaming here in the wilderness. Ah yes, it is true, from day to day I am growing younger and am beginning to take a new lease of life. I am recovering. That comes from the fresh, primitive nature which surrounds me.

I do not indulge in Romantic fancies. As it is absorbed through the eye and the ear and all the senses, the dear, the beautiful forest, thus I like to enjoy it. The solitary one alone finds the forest; where many seek, it flees and only the trees remain. The woods are lost to them on account of the trees. Nay, still more, or, indeed, still less, they do not even see the trees, but only the wood which serves for timber or fuel and the twigs which may be used for brooms. Or they open the gray eyes of learning and say — "That belongs to this class, or to that" — as if the pines and oaks, centuries old, were nothing but schoolboys.

I feel contented in the woods. As long as I enjoy it, I do not wish to hear a single word of the purpose it serves, as man's love of gain understands this purpose; I wish to be as childishly ignorant as if I had today just fallen from heaven upon the soft, cool moss in the shade.

A network of roots surrounds me, partly sucking the mother's milk from the earth for its trees, partly seeking to entwine itself about the mossy bank and Andreas Erdmann sitting upon it. Softly I rest upon the arms of the network — upon mother-arms.

The brown trunk of the fir towers straight upward, stretching a rich garland of rugged branches in all directions. They have long gray beards, hairy, twisted mosses hanging from bough to bough. Well polished and dripping with balsam is the silvery, shimmering pine. But in the rough, furrowed, knotted bark of the larch-tree, with the mysterious signs and innumerable scars, is engraved the whole world's legend, from the day when the exiled murderer Cain rested for the first time under the wild interwoven branches of the larch, up to the hour when another, also homeless, inhales the perfume of the tender, light-green needles.

It is dark, as in a Gothic temple; the pine-forest builds the pointed arch. Above rise the thousand little turrets of branches, between which the deep blue sky lights up the shady ground beneath, forming tiny mosaics. Or white clouds are sailing high above, trying to espy me — me, a little worm in the woods — and they waft a greeting to me — from — No, she is hidden by the hand of man under a baronial roof. Clouds, ye have not seen her — or have ye? Alas, no, they are drifted hither from distant deserts and seas.

There is a whispering, a rustling. The trees are speaking with one another. The forest dreams.

In all my life I have never seen such a remarkable woven mat as this variegated, wonderful network of mossy earth. It is a miniature forest, and in the bosom of its shade perhaps other beings rest, who like myself are watching the endless web of nature. Ah, how the ants hasten and run, embracing the smallest of small things with their slender arms, while endeavoring to poison everything hostile with their corroding fluid! A brilliant beetle has been contemptuously regarding the tiny, painstaking creatures, for it is endowed with wings. It now flutters haughtily upward, and glittering, circles away; suddenly it is ensnared and captured in a net. The spider, quiet and industrious, has been toiling long on this net; a veil, softer than any made on earth, has become the beetle's shroud.

The little birds in the branches are also planning their works of art; where the boughs are thickest, they weave a cradle-basket from straws and twigs for their beloved young.

Can it then be true that a red thread spins itself on through all races of the human and animal kingdoms, down to the very smallest creature? Does everything then follow one and the same law, the acts of King Solomon on his throne of gold and those of the sluggish, creeping worm under the stone? I should very much like to know.

See! yonder leaps a rabbit; the crowned stag is making his way through the underbrush. Each shrub acts as mysteriously as if concealing a hundred beings and wood-sprites within itself. Sharply defined shadow-forms lie upon the ground, over which strings of light spin themselves. And the breath of the forest plays upon these strings.

I step out into the clearing. A trembling breeze ripples toward me, plays with my curls, and kisses my cheeks. Here are light-green furze bushes, with their clusters of little red berries, dark, gleaming bilberry, and the evergreen laurel of our Alps, for some worthy poet of the forest, if any such should be born. The wood-bee is buzzing about among the bushes, and each leaf is a table spread for her.

And above this dim, perfumed field rises the charred trunk of a tree, its one bare branch lifted in defiance, threatening heaven for having once shattered its head with a lightning-stroke. And yonder towers a gray, cloven rock, in whose fissures the nimble lizard and the shimmering adder hide, and at whose feet flourish the serrated leaves of the fern, and the blue gentians, constantly waving greetings with their little caps.

Where there is no path, there is mine — where it is steepest, where the tangle of the alder-bushes and briars is thickest, where the dogberry grows, where the adder rustles in the yellow foliage of the beech, there I wander.

It is a delight to penetrate thus into the wilderness, into the dim and uncertain; that which I anticipate attracts me more than that which I know; that which I hope for is dearer to me than that which I have. I stand on the edge of a green meadow, inclosed by young fir-woods. Close to me a deer springs from the thicket, bounds over the meadow, stopping on the other side, where it now stands in a listening attitude with head thrown high. Following an inborn instinct of man, I raise my juniper stick, lay it beside my cheek like a gun, aiming toward the breast of the deer. It looks over at me, well aware that a juniper stick does not go off. Finally it begins to graze. Laying the stick on the ground again, I walk farther out on the meadow. The deer raises its head quickly and I now expect it to dart away. But it does not hasten, it licks its back and scratches itself behind the ear, and again begins to eat.

The triumphant roaring of a bull or the bells and bleating of a goat is now heard. The shepherd-boy comes skipping by. He will have nothing to do with the juniper-bushes; the thorns prick, the blueberries are bitter. He picks strawberries into his cap, or, what he likes better, into his mouth. Then, plucking the narrow pointed leaf of the goat-majoram he carries it to his lips, and through it brings forth a whistle which reëchoes far away in the cliffs and which other shepherd-lads in the distance give back to him. To these this is the sign of brotherhood. Through the raspberry-bushes wriggles the ant-grubber, searching for the resinous kernels in the ant-hills from which to prepare the incense, that wonderful grain whose smoky veil enchants the eye of mortals, so that they fall upon their knees before the sacrificial bread and see the Lord.

On the ridge beside the purple erica, under the blackberry leaves, the sweet-root flourishes; that is a toothsome spice for the shepherd-boy, and the *Sennin*[*] also likes to nibble it, that she may have a ringing voice for yodling on the Alm. The *Sennin*, I notice, is often affected in a singular manner; surely she has many, yes, a great many words upon her tongue, but the right one for her heart's desire is not among them; she therefore expresses it in another way and sings a song *without* words which throughout this region is called the *Jodel*.

I proceed down through a defile torn away by the wild torrents of the Kar. Trees and bushes arch over it, forming an arbor. A cool breeze fans me as I stand upon the shady bank of a forest lake, inclosed by dark walls and slender brown trunks of the primeval forest. A perfect stillness rests upon the water. The stray leaf of a beech or an oak rustles toward me. I hear the eternal murmuring of deepest silence. A little bell somewhere in space, we know not if on the earth below or in the starry heaven above, is constantly calling us. And in a quiet hour our soul catches the familiar sound and longs — and longs.

Peace of the primeval forest, thou still, thou holy refuge of the orphaned, the deserted, the pursued and world-weary; thou only Eden which remains for the unhappy!

Listen, Andreas! Dost thou hear the sound and echo of the song without words? That is the shepherd's hymn. Dost thou also hear the distant hammering and reverberating? That is the woodsman with the ax — the angel with the sword.

WITH THE HERDSMEN

The earliest people were the herdsmen. They are the most harmless folk that one meets in these wooded hills. So I have begun with them.

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[*] Term applied to the Alpine shepherdess.

Permission Berlin Photo. Co., New York

Hans Thoma

SUNDAY PEACE

And I have already learned something of pastoral life. With the exception of the couple up in the Miesenbach hut, none of them are at home here; the herdsmen really have no homes, they are wanderers. They spend the winter in the lower, outlying districts, dwelling in the farmyards to which the herds belong. They eat with the people and sleep with the cattle and goats. In the spring-time, when the freshets are over and the young blades of grain are peeping forth from their green sheaves toward heaven to see if the swallows have not yet come, the cattle are taken from the stalls and led by the herdsmen to the Alm. The cows are bedecked with tinkling bells, the calves and steers with green wreaths, such as the people wear at the feast of Corpus Christi. In the procession to the Alm, when the young people and cattle walk together, the ceremony of crowning with wreaths is conducted innocently enough; but when, after many weeks of unrestrained freedom upon the airy heights, the cattle return to the valley in the late autumn with fresh wreaths, the garland is often missing in the shepherdess' hair. On the Alm there is much sun and little shade, and the Alm-boy must bring the fresh water a long distance — then nothing withers more easily than such a tender wreath in her curly locks.

In the lovely summer-time these people lead a good and happy life upon the hills and I — truly and by my faith, I am good and happy with them. Sorrow and woe are like hot-house plants, they will not flourish in the fresh Alpine air. Even the old keeper of oxen, usually so surly, is constantly heard singing and tuning his pipe.

Within the herdsman's hut everything is well arranged and conveniently near at hand. By the hearth sits Domesticity in front of the fire and the sooty pots, and before the shaky table kneels Religion at the crudely ornamented *Haus-Altar.* And where the bedstead stands, the Lord Himself could not have put anything better. The bed is made from rough boards, upholstered with moss and rushes — it must be like that if the young woman of the Alm is to dream happily therein. In another room are the buckets and pans, and here the milk and butter business is carried on, the profits of which are honestly delivered to the owner of the herd.

The whole household is shut in by four wooden walls, on which the *Sennin* hears at night the elves knocking; this is the token of the fulfilment of her most secret heart's desire. I did not like to tell the credulous Aga that I thought the elves might be or were industrious wood-worms. What in heaven's name have wood-worms to do with her heart's desires? But these will be fulfilled all the same: the simple folk about here wish for nothing which cannot be attained. And the maid in the hut, as well as the shepherd-boy and the herd in the stall, sleep with an easy conscience.

In the morning the bright sun peeps through the window, calling, "Time to be up!" Now the shepherdess goes with the bucket to the stable, where between four legs flow the little white fountains of milk and butter. The fire on the hearth is ready for the milk and the herdsman is waiting for his breakfast. He yodles and shouts, and so the time passes. But Berthold manages in the simplest way; he places himself under the belly of the cow and drinks his breakfast directly from the udder.

It was on Berthold and Aga in the Miesenbach hut that I made my observations. After breakfast Aga takes the basket on her back and goes down toward the grazing meadows of the Thalmulde, that like a careful mistress she may prepare the table for her four-footed charges. The herd's meal lasts the whole day; for in the early morning Berthold has already led them down to the pastures wet with dew.

How does it happen that in the forest-land exist fewer and less appropriate expressions for love and tenderness than for jesting and fun? If love down in the valleys is not exactly communicative, up here among the firs and little cabbage-roses it is as dumb as fish in water. The kiss is not as customary here as in other places. It seems as if the warm blood did not take the time to mount to the lips, when there is so much to do elsewhere. Everything finds expression in the arms, and when a love-sick lad knows no other way of showing his feelings, he seizes his sweetheart, as the miller does a sack of grain, and swings her high in the air, at the same time giving a shout that verily tears the clouds asunder.

Berthold does it not a whit differently. They are two poor young people, left to themselves on the lonely Alpine heights. What is there to do? For the present, nothing at all!

WITH THE WOOD-DEVILS

In this wilderness there are trades of which I had no idea. The people literally dig their bread out of the earth and stones. They scrape it from the trees, and by the many-sided resources of their wits force it out of the teeming ant-hills and out of inedible fruits. How strange that man should know so well how to utilize everything!

The starved or daring wood-devils hold closer communication with the mass of mankind outside than one would suppose, and than they themselves perhaps imagine. Yet after all they know it well enough. For example, there is the root-digger. He climbs around among the rocks and digs out the aromatic roots with his crooked iron puncheon. He then sometimes sings the little song:

> "When I uproot the spikenard here,
> That grows upon the Alm,
> I like to think of the women-folk.—
> Canst thou guess where the spices go?
> To Turkey land, that the women-folk,
> A sweeter perfume may receive,
> In Turkey land, the women-folk."

He would have given up the digging long ago to lead solely a poacher's life, but he imagines that some time he is going to find a buried treasure under the stones. Digging for treasures, gold, and diamonds under the ground, these things he has heard of in fairy-tales and can never forget.

Gold and diamonds under the ground! Treasure-digging! The fairy-tale is right; the root-digger is right; the ploughman is right; the miner is right. But the treasure-digger is not right.

Of one thing I am careful, that is, not to offend the root-digger, the pitch-scraper, or the ant-grubber. These are are said to cause the bad weather — all devils' work — and since they live in the forests, from the forests come the many hard storms in the wooded and Alpine regions. But how they manage that the atoms of dew condense into water, that the drops freeze into bits of ice, that the bits of ice become heavy hail-stones, that flaming darts of lightning hiss through the night, and that the mighty thunder rolls, until at last it all bursts upon the trembling men and beasts of the earth — how they manage that, must be a profound secret of these wild fellows which I have not been able to discover.

Up among the hills is a glen called the Wolfsgrube. I recently visited this place, arriving there just in time to witness the burial of a man, who had been neither root-digger, ant-grubber, pitch-scraper, brandy-distiller, nor poacher, but the most extraordinary wood-devil.

He had never worked, but had earned his bread by eating. He was called "the Gormand;" I think he had no other name. He was a human wreck, although physically very strong. His hair had become a hopelessly tangled mat of sweat and resin; so he had no need of a hat. He often went to the surrounding villages on church-festival days to exhibit his tricks before the people. He did not consume tow and ribbons and that sort of thing, as jugglers usually do, but ate cloth, leather, and bits of glass. His favorite repast was old boots or felt hats, torn into bits and prepared with oil and vinegar. That paid him well, and his purse, like his stomach, had a good digestion. Day in, day out, he performed this feat; but everything has an end, Easter

Sunday as well as Good Friday. He was sitting before his glass of toddy in Kranabethannes' hut, saying in his arrogant way, "Eat your black bread yourself, Hannes; I'll drink the brandy and take a bite of the glass with it." Just then an old root-digger crawled out from a dark corner of the hearth: "Despise the black bread, do you? You!" At which the Gormand retorted: "Get out, root-digger; I'll eat you!" The old man then drew forth a small root, saying, "Here's something, you rascal, that's a little stronger than you are." "Bring it on!" screamed the Gormand, seizing the root and thrusting it down his throat. "You're done for!" chuckled the old man, and he disappeared into the forest. Suddenly springing up, the Gormand staggered out of the house and fell upon the grass, stone-dead. The meaning of it all was now plain. No one knew the old root-digger — he was the devil.

Half-fact, half-legend, so the superstitious people interpreted and related it to me. And they would not bury the man in the Holdenschlag churchyard. In the marshy ground of the Wolfsgrube, where only the rushes grow and wave their little woolly flags, they made the grave. Winding the body in thick fir-boughs, they shoved it with a pole, until it rolled into its final resting-place.

A pale, black-haired man, with a melancholy face though restless bearing, still remained standing beside the grave. Gazing into it, with a trembling hand he threw a clump of earth upon the form covered with pine boughs and, looking about him, said: "We will cover him with earth nevertheless. The devil has not taken him because of his good appetite; and his heart may have been no worse than his stomach."

This was the funeral sermon. And then a few men came and shoveled earth into the grave.

Later I again met the sad, pale man, whom they call the *Einspanig*. "Can you tell me something," I asked, "about the eater of broken glass? It is really a strange, weird tale."

"Strange and weird is the whole woodland," he answered; "a better digestion than ours, such a son of the wilderness may have. And superstition is the intellectual life of these people." With these words he turned and quickly stalked away.

What, old man, art thou not thyself a son of the wilderness? Thou art truly strange and weird enough. The *Einspanig,* "The Lone One," they call him; of his history they know nothing.

Among the wood-devils, the most cordial and, according to my judgment, the most dangerous, is the brandy-distiller. He wears finer clothes than the others and shaves his beard every week. He always carries about with him a little flask, affably treating each person who comes in his way. Whoever drinks is ruined, and follows him to the tavern.

The brandy-distiller reaps a double harvest; first the red berries from the mountain-ash, from the hop, from the sweet-broom, from everything that here produces fruit. He believes in the Spirit of Nature, that lives in all created things, and conjures it out of the fruits of the forest and, like the magician in the fairy-tale, into the bottle and, putting the stopple in quickly, imprisons it there. His distillery is a magic circle under a high, gloomy pine, a circle like that which the spider draws and weaves. Soon a few flies are there, wriggling in the net. The woods-people, as they go about or to and from their work, are at last enticed into the tavern — these are the flies of the two-legged spider, and from them the brandy-distiller now reaps his second harvest.

My voyages of discovery have cheered me more than I should have thought possible. True, a sad fate hangs over this little people, but this fate sometimes makes an unspeakably droll face. Besides I do not consider these foresters so utterly depraved and wretched. They are neglected and uncouth. Perhaps something might be made of them; but first the leaven must be added.

The race will not die out so easily. Right here in the damp, dark forest-land the little ones flourish like mushrooms. The youngsters follow the path of their elders and carry the grappling-iron for roots, or the herdsman's staff, or the pitch-scraper, or the ax.

But, according to the reports made to the priest in Holdenschlag, the forest children are all girls. The boys are mostly christened with the water of the woods; they are recorded in no parish-register, so that they may remain unnoticed outside by the bailiffs and omitted from the military list. The men here say that the government and whatever belongs to it costs them more than it would be worth to them, and they will renounce it. That may be all true, but the government does not renounce its claims on the healthy Winkelstegers.

The forest people do not allow themselves to be elevated or drawn by force; he who would win them for higher things must descend quite to them, must lead them up arm in arm and indeed by long, circuitous route.

IN THE FELSENTHAL

From the slopes of the foot hills and the cliffs of the Hochzahn with its chain of glaciers, the wooded mountains extend on and on toward the west. Seen from above they lie there like a dark-blue sea, concealing in their depths the everlasting shadows and the strange people.

A day's journey from the valley of the Winkel toward the west, far below the last hut, is a place where, according to the legend, the world is fastened in with boards.

It were better said, walled in with stones; deep fissured precipices shut off the forest-land; here begin the Alps, where the rocky boulders no longer lie or lean, but soar straight up into the sky. A sea of snow and ice with crags, about which hover everlasting mists, extends endlessly, it is said, over the giant strongholds above, which in olden times guarded an Eden now turned to stone. Thus the legend. Strange that this wonderful dream of a lost paradise yet to be regained should dawn in the hearts of *all* people and nations!

These foresters will not believe that on the other side of the Alps there are other regions also inhabited by man. Only one old, shy, blinking charcoal-burner repeats the story told him by his grandfather, that over there were human beings, who wore such high pointed hats that they could not walk about on the mountains in the evening without knocking down the stars. So the Lord God was obliged to carefully draw down the clouds every night in order to keep a single star in heaven. The rogue meant the pointed hats of the Tyrolese.

The region is adapted to gloomy myths. It is a dead valley in which no little finch will sing, no wild pigeon coo, no woodpecker chatter, in which loneliness itself has fallen asleep. Upon the gray moss-covered ground piles of rock lie about, just as they have been broken from the high cliff. Here and there a bold little fir-tree has climbed up on one of these gray, weather-beaten boulders and proudly looks about, thinking itself now more fortunate than the other half-dead trees on the sandy soil below. It will not be long before it too will perish from hunger and thirst, and will fall from the barren rock. Here the forest cannot flourish, and if a straight and slender fir shoots up anywhere, its days are numbered. A storm-wind suddenly comes rushing down from the rocky defile and almost gently lays the young tree, together with its broken roots, upon the ground.

The Scotch fir alone is still courageous; it climbs the steep sides between the precipices to discover how it looks up there with the *Edelweiss,* with the Alpine roses, with the chamois, and how far it is yet to the snow. But the good Scotch fir is no daughter of the Alps; soon a dizziness seizes it and, frightened, it crouches down and crawls painfully upon its knees, with its twisted, crippled arms always reaching out and clutching something, the little heads of the cones stretching upward in sheer curiosity, until finally it comes out into the damp veil of mist and aimlessly wanders about among the rocks.

Upon one of the fallen boulders of this remotest valley in the forest stands a cross. It is very clumsily made out of two rough pieces of wood; in places the bark is still clinging to it. Silently it stands there in the barren waste; it is like the first message concerning the Redeemer of the world, which in olden times the holy Boniface made from the trees of the forest and set up in the German wilderness.

I have often asked the meaning of this cross. From time immemorial it has stood upon the rock, and no man can say who placed it there. According to the legend it was never placed there. Every thousand years a little bird flew into the forest, bringing a seed of grain from unknown lands. Previously it was not known what had become of the seeds, whether they had been lost, or whether the poisonous plant with the blueberries, or the thorn-bush with the white rose, or something else, evil or good, had sprung from them. But when the bird appeared last it laid the seed upon the rock in the Felsenthal, and from it sprang the cross. Sometimes one goes there to pray before it; the prayer has often brought a blessing at once, but often, too, a misfortune has followed. So it is uncertain whether the cross is for weal or woe. The Einspanig is the most frequently seen in the Felsenthal, and here he performs his devotions before the symbol; but it is also uncertain whether the Einspanig is good or evil.

After many days of wandering I returned once more to my house in the Winkel, much puzzled in my mind about the cross in the Felsenthal and the Einspanig. I learned a little concerning the latter on reaching home.

I was surprised to find my housekeeper, usually so good-natured, quite irritable today. It appears that seeing the Einspanig passing, the woman, who happened to look out at that moment, thought to herself, "Oh, how I should like to gossip a little with this queer man, and find out something about him." And as he accidentally turned his face toward the door, she cordially invited him to enter and rest a little on her bench. On his accepting her invitation, she hastily brought him bread and milk, and in her own peculiar way asked, "Good man of God, where do you come from?"

"Down from the Felsenthal," was the answer.

"You foolish fellow!" cried the woman, "you don't mean that horrible place! Up there in the Felsenthal the world is fastened in with boards."

The Einspanig then replied quietly: "Nowhere is the world fastened in with boards. The mountains stretch far, far back beyond the Hochzahn, then comes the hilly country, then the plains, then the water which extends many thousand miles, then land again with mountain and valleys and little hills, and again water, and again land and water and land and land—"

Interrupting him here, the woman cried, "*Mein Gott,* Einspanig, how much farther then?"

"As far as home, into our country, into our forest, into the Winkel, into the Felsenthal. Worthy woman, if God should give you wings and you should fly away toward the setting sun and on and always on, following your nose and the sun, then one day you would come flying from where the sun rises toward your peaceful home."

"Oh, you humbug!" cried the woman, "go tell your tales to some one else; I am the Winkel-warden's wife. I'll give you the milk and with it the honest opinion of old people: Somewhere there is a place where the world is fastened in with boards. That is the old faith, and in that faith I will live and die."

"Women, all honor to your old faith!" replied the Einspanig, "but I have already traveled the road toward the setting sun and back here from the rising sun."

These words seemed to have thoroughly embittered her. "O, you prevaricator!" she screamed, "the devil has set his mark upon you." And then shaking his head the man walked away.

The good woman must have found it hard waiting for me to give further vent to her feelings. As I approached the house she called to me over the fence: "By my troth! What kind of people there are upon God's dear earth, to be sure! Now they do not even believe that there is an end to this world! But I say: Our Lord God has made it all right, and I'll stick to my old faith, and the world is fastened in with boards!"

"Of course, of course," I assented, as I climbed over the board fence. "Quite right—fastened in with boards!"

And so we will cling to the old faith.

WITH THE WOOD-CUTTERS

Alas, that the forest also should have its enemies—the silent, unending forest, as it stretches over hill and vale—lying there, boundless, green and dark, and farther on, dimly blue in the sunny horizon.

What a beautiful rustling, murmuring, echoing, living rampart, protecting all within it from the wild discord without! But—the peace of the woods is dead.

In the forest the wind roars, striking off the lustily waving arm of many a young pine, breaking the neck of many a daring giant. And in the depths, rushing and foaming in white frothy flakes—like a gathering storm—is the Wildbach, which washes, digs, and gnaws the earth away from the roots, ever deeper and deeper, until at last the mighty tree is almost standing in the air, only supporting itself above by resting its strong arms upon its neighbors, and finally plunging into the grave, which the water has maliciously been digging for it—that water which the tree has fed with its falling dew, protected with its thick branches from the thirst of the wind and guarded with its shade from the consuming kiss of the sun. And the woodpecker pecks the bark in the airy tree-top, while the sharp-toothed wheel of time revolves constantly, and the chips fly—in the spring as blossoms, in the autumn as withered needles and leaves.

There is an eternal ending and in the ending are always the germs of beginning.

Then man comes for the first time with his rage for destruction. The blows and strokes resound, the saw buzzes, the ax is heard striking the iron wedge in the dark valley — if you look from above over the silent sea of trees, you do not dream which one is doomed.

But the ax and the wedge pierce deeper and deeper; then the tree, a century old, shakes its lofty head, not in the least comprehending what the insignificant men below there want,— the droll tiny creatures; it cannot understand and again shakes its head. Then comes the thrust through its heart; there is a cracking, a snapping, and now the giant totters and bends; whizzing and whistling in an immense circle, it falls with a wild crash to the earth. There is an empty space in the air, the forest has a gap. A hundred spring-times have borne the tree up with their love and gentleness; now it is dead, and the world exists and continues without it — the living tree.

Silent stand the two or three men, supporting themselves upon the handles of their axes, and gaze upon their victim. They do not mourn, they do not exult, a cruel indifference rests upon their rough, sunburnt features; their very faces and hands resemble the fir bark. Filling their pipes, they sharpen the axes and return to work. They chop the branches from the fallen trunk, they shave off the bark with a broad knife, cutting it perhaps into cord-lengths, and now the proud tree lies there transformed into bare logs.

The wood-cutter has no thought for the beauty of the wilderness. To him the forest is nothing more than a hostile something from which he must wrest bread and existence with the gleaming ax. And what a long day's work it is from early morning until twilight, with but a single hour's rest at noon! While the wood-devil is his own master, the wood-cutter is the slave of others. As for his food, the wood-cutter is a being who nourishes himself from plants, unless he be a good poacher, who is shrewd enough to avoid being captured. However, he luxuriates in imagination and likes to name his flour-dumplings after the animals of the forest. So for breakfast, dinner, and supper he always eats venison, foxes, sparrows, or whatever he christens his meal-cakes. One Friday a young man invited me to a "Venison." Ah, thought I, he does not keep Fast Day — he is certainly one of the Evangelicals who was left in the Alps after the peasant wars. But the "Venison" proved to be harmless little meal-cakes.

Eighteen groschen wages for a day's work — that is indeed prosperity; from it many a woodsman has bought himself a little house and goat, and supported a wife and troop of children. He has, at least, his own hearth and in addition to the meal-cakes, a rich soup of goat's milk.

However, the expenses of the forest cabin are not very great. Fortunately not much is required of the good fathers of families.

"Man can live as he likes,
If lucky he be,—
For the children some bread,
Tobacco for me,"

is the song of the forest householder.

But others, and indeed most of them, drown their earnings in brandy, thus forfeiting the few comforts which their unambitious natures demand. Such spendthrifts live together by the dozen in a single hut, cooking their dinner at a common hearth which is in the middle of the cabin. Along the walls are spread the straw beds.

Furthermore, in each woodman's hut, in some corner or under some board, rifles are always concealed.

The working-day garb of the wood-cutter has no striking characteristics; it consists of a combination of tattered fustian, dull-colored knitted wool, and a horny leather hide, everything more or less sticky with resin and almost entirely hiding the form beneath. But the badge is the high, yellowish-green hat with the tuft of feathers. The feather tuft is most important, for that is the mark of some poaching adventure, some love affair, or savage brawl.

Occasionally these people go to the more distant places to celebrate the *Kirmess* — and this is a necessity to them, as here there are no Sundays, indeed the very heart of Sunday — the church itself — is missing.

At these feasts the rough woods-people wear dress-coats and tall hats — one would hardly believe it. But the coat is of course fustian, edged with green; miniature trees, cut out of the same green material, decorate the sleeves and back above the coat-tails; large brass buttons glisten in the sunlight, and a high standing collar reaches to the head, which is covered by the tall hat, broad brimmed and with flaring crown. This is made from rough felt, with a wide green band and shining brass buckle.

For the most part they are good-hearted people; but, if irritated, they can become savage past all belief. Their eyes, although deep-set, are bright and sparkling. Kindness is clearly read there as well as quickness of temper.

But they are pious, suspiciously pious. Each one has his flask of holy water and tells his beads, with the parenthesis, " Bless all poor souls in purgatory, and help us to find the money and goods now uselessly buried in the ground." And each has seen at least one ghost in his life.

According to my observation a bloody fight is quite an ordinary occurrence with these people, and homicide no rarity. On the other hand, thefts are never committed.

The wood-cutter is born under the tree; his father places, one might almost say, the ax-handle in his hand before the spoon, and instead of the nursing-bottle the little one reaches for the tobacco-pouch. He who is unable to buy tobacco makes it for himself from beech leaves.

Amiability is not a native trait of these people. They scarcely know peaceful joy; they strive for noisy pleasure. They are not even sensitive to pain. If one of them drives the sharp ax into his leg he merely says it *tickles* him a little. But in a few days all is healed again. And if a man loses a finger, it is a misfortune only because of the inconvenience in lighting his pipe.

An old setter of broken bones and an extractor of teeth form the entire medical faculty, while pine-resin and pitch-oil are the only drugs used in this shady forest-world.

When these people go away homesickness is their greatest woe. The homeless ones homesick? Their real trouble is a longing for the forest hills where they have passed a portion of their lives.

[In the story of "Black Mathes," which Rosegger inserts here, we have a very successful protrayal of another type of his hardy mountaineers. But as Mathes, the hero of the sketch, is scarcely connected with the larger theme of *The Forest Schoolmaster,* except as being the father of Lazarus, the sketch has been omitted. It may suffice to say that Mathes, though guilty of bloodshed, is so only by reason of his passionate, fiery temper, lashed into fury by the heartless taunts and unfeeling jibes of his fellowmen. At bottom his soul is guileless and void of offence. Unfortunately, however, his son, Lazarus, is the inheritor of his frailties and lack of self control.]

The Feast of the Virgin Mary, 1814.

And thus I have wandered about the Winkel forests. I have been in the Hinter Winkel and in the ravines of the Miesenbach, in the forests of the Kar, in the Lautergräben, and in the Wolfsgrube, in the Felsenthal and on the pastures of the Alm, and yonder in the glen where lies the beautiful lake. I have introduced myself to the old and made myself known to the young. It costs trouble and there are misunderstandings. With a few exceptions, the best of these people are not so good or the worst so bad as I formerly believed.

The wood-cutters from the Lautergräben are approaching nearer and nearer the Winkel, and already through the silent forest I have heard the crashing of many a falling tree. Upon the summit of the Lauter, a pale reddish plain is spreading from day to day and, in the morning sunlight, it shines down in a friendly way through the dark green of the forest.

In the ravines of the Winkel, stone-breakers and ditchers are working; a wagon road is to be built for the transportation of coal and wood.

I like to go about with the workmen, watching them and talking with them, desirous of learning something of their life.

But occasionally the people are a little distrustful of me and approach me with prejudice. I often carry a little volume of Goethe with me, and seat myself in some attractive nook to read. Many a time I have been secretly watched while so occupied. And then the report circulates through the forest that I am a wizard and have a book containing magic signs. I have wondered if this peculiar reputation may not at first have given me some advantage in carrying out my plans. The children would surely be allowed by their parents to learn to read, if I told them that by first understanding the magic signs one could exorcise devils, dig for treasure, and control the weather. I think that the grown people themselves and even the graybeards would drop their tools and come to school to me. But that would be dishonorable and I should only produce the opposite result from that which I desire. The chief thing is, not that the people learn to read and write, but that they may be freed from harmful prejudices and have pure hearts. Of course I might later substitute books of morals and say—"Here are the true magic signs;" but those whom I had deceived would have no further confidence in me, and the evil would be greater rather than less.

We will not sneak through a roundabout way; we will hew a straight path through the midst of the old trees.

A few times I have read songs to the people; to the girls *Heidenröslein,* and have taught *Christel* to the boys. They learn the verses quickly, and they are already much sung in the forest.

And now the autumn has come. The clouds are dispersed with the morning mists, leaving the sky bright and clear. The brilliant foliage of the maples stands out in relief against the dark brown of the pine-forest, while in the valley, the meadows have become green anew or glisten with the silvery hoar-frost. In these woods the autumn is more brilliant and almost lovelier than the spring. In the spring there is a capricious brightness and splendor, song and exultation everywhere. The autumn, on the contrary, is like a quiet, solemn Sabbath. No longer mindful of the earth, Nature is expectantly listening to heaven, and the breath of God stirs harmonious melodies upon the golden strings of mellow sunshine.

The sky has become so trustworthy that it more than fulfils through the day that which it promises in the morning with its sad and misty eyes. One gazes into its still, blue depths.

Yonder beside the forest fire sits the shepherd-boy. He is taking some little round things from a bag and shoving them into the fire.

"Tell me, boy, where did you get those potatoes?"

Turning red, he replies, "The potatoes, I—I found them."

"May God bless them to you, and another time do not 'find' them, but go to the Winkel-warden's wife when you are hungry; she will give you some."

"Those which are given don't taste good," is the answer; "those that are found are better, the salt is already on them."

Yonder stands a bush, which has been decorated in the night with a chain of dew-pearls; today the dew is congealed and is destroying the very heart of the plant.

On such a late autumn day I saw at one time an old woman sitting in the woods. This woman once had a child. He went out to the world, to torrid Brazil, seeking for gold. The horizon is so perfectly clear, that the mother is able to gaze into the distant past, where the beloved boy is standing. She looks at him, smiles at him, and falls asleep. The next morning she is still sitting upon the stone, and now she has a white mantle about her. The snow has come, autumn is over. And a ship is bearing a letter cross the sea bound for the hot zones of South America. It carries news to a sun-burnt man from his distant home — " Mother died in the woods." A tiny tear laboriously winds its way from under his lashes, the sun quickly dries it, and afterward as before the watchword is: Gold! Gold! If a single letter might come back to the old motherland, its message would be — " The son crushed in gold."

What am I dreaming here? It is the way of the world, and is no concern of mine. I long for peace in the midst of the quiet autumn of this forest.

Up there in the top of the beech-tree, a weary leaf separates from the stem, falls from branch to branch and dangles by an infinitesimally tender, shining spider's web, down to me upon the cool, shady earth. The people far away with whom I once lived, what may they be doing? That wonderful maiden is always blooming — always — even in the autumn; and in Saxonland the dry leaves are wafted over the graves.

Loneliness cannot banish the sorrow of loneliness. I must look for something to distract and elevate me that I may not become one-sided in my surroundings.

I have commenced the study of botany; I have read from books how the erica grows, and the heath-rose, and other flowers; and I have watched the same plants hours and hours at a time. And I have found no connection between the dead leaf in the book and the living one in the woods. The book says of the gentian: " This plant belongs to the fifth class, among those of the first order, is found in the Alps, has a blue flower, and serves as medicine." It speaks of a number of anthers, pistils, embryos, etc. And that is the family and baptismal certificate of the poor gentian. Oh, if such a plant could read, it would congeal on the spot! Such descriptions are, indeed, more chilling than the hoar-frost of autumn.

The forest people know better. The flower lives and loves and speaks a wonderful language. But the gentian trembles with foreboding when man approaches; and it is more afraid of his passionately glowing breath than of the deathly cold kiss of the first snow.

So I am one who does not understand and is not understood. Without aim or plan I am whirling in the monstrous, living wheel of nature.

Ah, if I but only understood myself! Scarcely at rest, after the fever of the world and enjoying the peace of the woods, I already long again to cast one glance into the distance, as far as the eye of man can reach.

Yonder upon the blue forest's edge, I would I might stand and look far out into the land over at other men. They are no better than the foresters, and know scarcely more; yet they are striving after, hoping for, and seeking Thee, O God!

ON JACOB'S LADDER

One beautiful autumn morning I felt inclined to climb the high mountain, whose loftiest peak is called the Graue Zahn. With us down here in the Winkel, there is altogether too much shadow, and up there one stands in the bright circle of the wide world. There is no path thither; one must go straight on, through underbrush, thickets, stones, and tangled mosses.

After some hours I arrived at the Miesenbach hut. The gay young pair have already departed. The summer with its life and activity is over; the hut stands in autumnal loneliness. The windows from which Aga used to peep at the lad are fastened with bars; the spring in front is neglected and has become nearly dry; and the icicle on the end of the gutter grows downward — toward the earth. The bell of a meadow-saffron swings near it, and rings to the last gasp of the dying fountain.

I seated myself upon the top of a watering-trough and ate my breakfast. It consisted of a piece of bread made of rye- and oat-flour, such as is eaten everywhere in this forest-land. That is a meal which, literally, tickles the palate, very coarse-grained and full of bits of bran. In the country outside, where wheat grows, such food would not be to our taste; here it is all we ask for when we pray, "Give us this day our daily bread!" But there are also times in this region when the Lord is sparing even with the oat-bread; then dried straw and moss come under the millstone. God bless to me the piece of bread and the sip of water with it! Prepared with God's blessing, ye city chefs, everything becomes palatable.

I then begin to climb farther. First I cross the Kar, from whose bed project stones, washed smooth by the waves. Between the stones stand tufts of pale feather-grass and lichens. Some tender, snow-white flowers are also swaying to and fro, looking timidly about as if they had lost their way up here on the rocky waste and longed to return whence they came. Of the once beautiful red sea of Alpine roses, the sharp briers of the bush alone remain. I climb higher, wending my way around the walls of rock and the peak of the Kleinzahn; I then stride along a ridge which extends toward the main mountain range.

There I have before me the blinding fields of the glaciers, smooth, softly gleaming like ivory, stretching in broad, gentle slopes and hollows, or in creviced multiform precipices of ice reaching from height to height. Between, tower-battlements of rock, and yonder, in the airy distance, above the gleaming glaciers, rises many a dark-gray, sharp-toothed cone, soaring far above the highest peak of the mountains. That is my goal, the Graue Zahn.

Toward the east the ground descends to the waving depths of the dusky forest. And the undulating meadows of the Alm lie deep as in a gulf. Here and there is the gray dot of an Alm hut, of which the shining roof alone is visible. On the northern side yawns the awful abyss, beneath whose shadow is the dim, black lake.

I walked a few hours over the difficult and dangerous path, along the edge to the glaciers. Here I bound on my climbing-irons, strapped my knapsack tighter, and held my

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RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION

stick more firmly in my hand. The alpenstock is an inheritance from Black Mathes. It is covered with innumerable little notches, which do not show, however, how often its former possessor may have climbed the Zahn or any other mountain, but how many people he has knocked to the ground in a fight. A gruesome stick, this! yet it has helped me up over the smooth, white snow-slopes, on over the wild ice crevasses, and finally up the last steep precipice to the summit of the Zahn. It has done it faithfully. And how gladly from this high mountain would I have called out into the other world to Mathes, "Friend, this is a good stick; you would have climbed high with it, if you had understood it!"

Now I stand on the summit.

If I were a being that might spin itself by the threads of sunlight up to the Kingdom of God, I—

Under a jutting stone I seat myself upon the weather-beaten ground and look about me. Near by are the fine, broken spires of immovable, perpendicular slabs of slate. Above me a sharp breeze may be stirring; I do not hear it; I do not feel it; the jutting rock, the highest peak of the Zahn, protects me. The friendly warmth of the sun touches my limbs. The quiet and the nearness to heaven bring peace to my soul. I ponder how eternal rest would be. To be happy in heaven, to live always in joy, always contented and without pain; to wish for nothing, to long for nothing, to hope for nothing, and to fear nothing, on through all time. Would it not after all be a little wearisome? Should I not perhaps wish to take a leave of absence sometimes, to look down here at the world once more? My possessions here would easily go into a nutshell. But I think were I once up there, I should long to be down here again. How strange are earthly joys and sorrows!

But if I came back, a good angel would have to lend me his wings that I might fly across the snowy heights and sunny peaks and ridges, on into the distance yonder, where the edge of the mountain chain cuts through the airy heavens; and upon that last white peak I would rest and look over into the expanse of plain and to the towers of the city. Perhaps I might see the gable of the house, or even the gleam of the window where *she* is standing.

And if I saw the gleam of that window, I would willingly turn about and enter heaven again.

Is it then really true that one can behold the sea from this peak? My eyes are not clear, and yonder, in the south, the gray of the earth blends with the gray of the sky. I know the firm ground well enough, the mold which they call the fruitful earth. Couldst thou, mine eye, only once reach the wide sea!

When the sun changed, so that a deep shadow appeared upon my stony resting-place, I arose and climbed to the very highest point. I took in the whole picture of the tremendous crown of Alpine peaks.

And then I descended by the precipices, the crevasses of the glaciers and the snow-fields; I crossed the long ridge, finally reaching the soft, yielding meadows, where the wooded hills were before me once more. Twilight was settling over the valleys, which was most comforting to my overstrained eyes. For a while I covered them with my hand, and when at last I was able to look once more, the gold of the setting sun was illuminating the heights.

As I came to the Miesenbach hut before which I sat in the morning, an amusing incident occurred.

While passing the hut, I thought how friendly and homelike an inhabited human dwelling looks to the wanderer, but how forbidding and dreary the same place appears, when it stands empty and deserted! Suddenly I hear groaning from within.

My feet, already very tired, at once become as light as a feather and would run away, but my reason forbids, and, straining my ears to listen, I stand and gaze. From under one corner of the jutting roof proceed a pounding and snorting, and I then behold a strange spectacle. From out the rough, brown; wooden wall, project a man's head and breast, two shoulders and one hand, a living, wriggling mass, and from within I hear the noise of the knees and feet.

Perceiving me, he cries loudly: " Holy cross, how lucky that some one has come at last! Couldn't you help me a little?—it needs only a jerk. Curse this window."

" Yes, my friend," I say; " but first, I must ask you a few questions."

" Stupid! " he replies; "just as if an honest Christian couldn't get caught if the hole is too small. I am the son of the master wood-cutter from the Lautergräben and on my way across the Alm, down to the Winkelegg forest. As I pass the hut, I see that the door stands wide open. ' There is nothing in there,' I said—' but 'tis a bad thing to leave an open door in an empty house; the snow will fly in all winter long. The shepherdess must have been in a hurry when she moved down to the valley—she must be a nice sort of a person to go and leave everything open.' Well, I enter, close the door and from within place a few blocks of wood against it, afterward climb upon the bench, and as I try to get out through this smoke-window, I stick fast like the devil."

But I do not yet trust the lad, and look at him awhile as he dangles.

" I must be in Holdenschlag early tomorrow," he mutters.

" What do you want in Holdenschlag? " I say.

" Lord, because there is to be a wedding! " he growls, already quite indignant.

"And why must you be present? "

At first he refuses to answer, but finally bursts out—" By Jessas and Anna, because I'm needed there! "

" Oh, then of course, we must try to help you," I say, and climbing a little way up the wall I begin pulling at the lad, until at last we have the second hand out; then it is easier. He is soon standing on the ground, where he looks for his pointed hat which has rolled away, stretches his stiffened limbs, and with flushed face looks up once more at the little smoke-window, exclaiming, "The devil take you, that was a trap, sure enough!"

In the twilight we went down together toward the Winkelegg forest. "And tomorrow, then, you will be in Holdenschlag at the wedding? Are you the groomsman?" I asked.

"The groomsman? no, I am not that."

"Perhaps then the ceremony could have been performed without you."

"Without me?" he said at last; "no, I don't think it could. For you see, this is the way of it, it couldn't be performed without me, because—because, it looks very much as if I were the bridegroom."

The young man then politely invited me to his wedding. He guided me faithfully as we walked down through the dark forest to the narrow valley of the Winkelegg.

The wood-cutter's son from the Lautergräben urged me to accompany him into the hut which stands under the spreading pine.

A young woman is standing by the hearth, laying larch-branches crosswise on the fire. My companion informs me that she is his betrothed.

Behind the broad tile-stove, which reaches to the sooty ceiling, sits a little woman. She glares at me, the strange intruder, with her large green eyes, while with unsteady fingers she is drawing the strings through a new pair of shoes. At the same time she continually wipes her eyes, which are already dimmed like an old window-pane that for many years has been exposed to the smoke of the charcoal-burner's hut. My companion tells me that this is the mother of his betrothed, who is everywhere called by the people, Russkathel (Soot-Kate).

Beyond, in the darkest corner, I see a rough, manly figure, his body bared to the waist, washing and scrubbing himself over a massive wooden basin with such force that he snorts like a beast of burden.

"That is the brother of my betrothed," explains the young man; "he is the charcoal-burner here and they call him Russ-Bartelmei."

The lad turns to his mother-in-law: "Give me the shoe, —you are leaving out half of the eyelets; such work is much too fine for your weak eyes, *Mütterchen!*"

"Yes, Paul, that's true," mumbles the old woman good-naturedly from her toothless mouth, "but, listen, Paul; my grandmother laced my mother's shoes, and my mother did it for me; and why should such an old crooked creature as I be in the world, if I couldn't lace my Annamirl's shoes?"

"Perhaps you'll soon have other work, *Mütterchen;* rocking the cradle you'll not need to strain your eyes," answers Paul mischievously.

At this, Annamirl shakes her finger at him, saying, "You good-for-nothing!"

And my wood-cutter's son draws the lacing through the shoes of his betrothed. The old woman, having once found her tongue, begins to prattle: "And don't forget, Annamirl," says she, "you must try it also. It will come out all right."

"Do you mean that I should plant the christening-money, *Mütterchen?*"

"Yes, that's it. Under a branching pine-tree you must bury a groschen on your wedding-night. That is the money-seed, and you shall see, in three days it will bloom, and in three months it may indeed be ripe. Our ancestors did it, but they were not all successful. It was this way: my grandmother missed the time, my mother never found the spreading pine-tree again, and I planted a counterfeit groschen. On that account, my daughter, take careful note of the hour as well as of the tree, then the groschen will grow, and you will have money enough all your days."

Annamirl opens an old chest and begins to rummage among the clothes and other contents. I believe she was seeking the christening-money.

The charcoal-burner washes and rubs himself. He changes the water many times, but it is always as black as ink. But finally it turns only gray; then Russ-Bartelmei stops and dries himself; he dresses, sits down on the door-sill, and, taking a long breath, says, " Yes, folks, I've got rid of one skin now, and the other is beginning to show a little." The new one, however, has grown very red, although in places it is still somewhat dingy; but it is Russ-Bartelmei all the same, who is going to his sister's wedding on the morrow.

I am invited to spend the night in the hut, and the bride hospitably sets a dish of eggs before me, because I am the " learned man," who might sometime be of use, should the occasion offer itself and the children prove to be intelligent.

The next day, when the dawn is glowing through the white smoke, the people come from all parts of the forest. They are dressed and decked out as I have never seen them before. They bring wedding-presents with them. The pitch-maker comes with a black, glistening jug of pitch-oil. " For the health of the bridal couple," he announces, and then adds: " What is the message of the pitch-oil? If in life you have trouble to bear, you must apply at once the oil of patience. That's the pitch-oil's message." Root-diggers come with seeds and bunches of fragrant herbs, and the ant-grubbers, with incense; children bring wild fruit in little baskets of fir-bark; wood-cutters come bearing household utensils. Schwamelfuchs, an old hunchbacked, rough little man, is dragging a huge earthenware bowl, a veritable family kettle, large enough to feed a dozen mouths. Others bring wooden spoons for it; still others unpack meal- and lard-buckets, and a charcoal-burner's wife comes staggering in, quite embarrassed, and hands the bride a carefully wrapped package. As with awkward words of thanks she opens it, two fat stuffed capons come to light. These are spied by Russkathel, who, already in gala dress and full of eager expectation, is creeping along the walls, and she whispers to her daughter: " Do you know, Annamirl, where the best wedding-gift should be put? Ah, yes, it should be buried in the cool earth. Later a beautiful woman will come in a golden wagon, drawn by two little kittens; these will dig out the wedding-gift with their claws, and the woman, taking it in her snow-white hand, will drive three times around the hut; if you do this no sorrow can come to your holy wedlock.'' So the tale of Freya is still told in the German forest.

Annamirl is silent for a moment, and, turning the heavy, neatly picked and stuffed fowls around and around in her hands, as if they were already on the spit, she finally remarks: ''I think, mother, they would spoil in the earth, or the cats would eat them, and for that reason, I say, let us eat them ourselves.''

At last even the elegant brandy-distiller arrives with his huge earthen jug, which immediately spreads an odor of spirits throughout the house. Scenting it, Russ-Bartelmei, curious to see how such a jug is made and corked up, hurries forward at once.

But here Annamirl interferes: ''May God bless you a thousand times, Brandy-Hannes; that is altogether too much, we could never repay you for it. Perhaps this is the most valuable wedding-gift, so with it I will carry out the old custom.''

Quickly drawing the stopper, she pours the sparkling, smoking brandy upon the ground, to the last drop. The old woman giggles and grumbles, ''You fool, you! now both your kittens will be tipsy; and then what a row we shall have!''

By the time all are assembled, the sun is already shining in at the door. During the night a meal has been cooked, which the people now devour with good appetites and gay conversation. I also take part in it, afterward joining the children who are present, giving them some of the food in their wooden dishes, that they too may have their share of the feast.

Then we all depart. A single old man remains behind with the charcoal-burners. He stands a long time before the door, resting upon his iron hook and smoking a short-stemmed pipe, while with a grin he gazes after us until we have disappeared in the shady defile. Then only the silent, friendly morning sun still rests upon the pine-trees.

A number of men in the wedding-procession have even brought rifles with them; but today they do not shoot at the creatures of the forest, they fire into the air, considering that they are thus adding greatly to the festivities and splendor.

There is singing and shouting, until the summer day fairly trembles. Many a gay song is sung, tricks are played, old-fashioned games are tried as we march, and it is already noon when we reach the church at Holdenschlag. Five men come to meet us with trumpets, fifes, and a huge drum which the drummer pounds with true festive fury; and what an excitement and roar of laughter there is when, suddenly, the drum-stick breaks through the much martyred skin and, shooting into the inside, catches its tact upon the other end. A young man is edging around the procession, and, according to the old custom, trying to take the bride away from us; but the groomsman is on his guard, although in reality watching his purse more closely than his bride; for should he lose the former, the robber would drag him to some distant tavern, where he would have to pay for the drinks.

The bridegroom accompanies the first bridesmaid; not until after the ceremony does he join his wife. Then the groomsman walks with the bridesmaid, so that the seed is sown again for a new wedding. The groomsman is well known to me; his name is Berthold, the bridesmaid is called Aga.

In the church wine is drunk and the priest gives a very edifying talk upon the sacrament of marriage and its divine purpose. The good old man speaks most beautifully, but the people from the woods do not fully understand his high German. Not until we are in the tavern, and all have eaten, drunk, and played pranks, is the real sermon for the people delivered. Then old, bearded Rüpel, our forest-bard, raises his wine-glass and begins to speak:

"To God be praise! As at the feast in Galilee, so with us may our Master be, to change the water into wine, the whole of Winkel brook today, the whole of Winkel brook for aye! The wine is clear and pure, the white and red together flow, as sure as youthful hearts that onward go, in honor bound and love. From light of sun and moon, the wine has caught its fire, between the earth and sky—as grow our souls and bodies from on high, and from below. To bridegroom and to bride today, may this sweet wine bring health, I pray."

What a merry-making and shouting now follows, and the fifes and fiddles resound as the wine is poured upon the green wreath of the bride.

Each one now raises his glass and extemporaneously delivers his wedding-speech or bridal-poem. Finally old Russ-Kath staggers to her feet and with an incredibly clear voice sings:

"Cut down the pear-tree,
Cut down the box-tree,
Cut both the pear- and box-tree down,
Sweetheart, to make thee
Out of the box-tree
Bedstead, the finest in all the town."

As things are now going, it seems to me that the noise and clamor must burst through all four walls, out into the quiet evening.

Gradually, however, things grow quieter and the people turn their eyes toward me, to see if I, the teacher, have no toast for the bride.

So I arise and say: "Joy and blessing to the bridal pair! And when, after five-and-twenty years, their descendants enter the marriage state, may it be in the parish church by the Winkel bridge! I drink to your health!" This is my bridal toast.

Thereupon follow a murmuring and whispering, and one of the oldest of the company approaches and politely asks me the meaning of my speech.

All night the inn at Holdenschlag resounds with the music, dancing, and singing of the wedding-guests.

The next morning we escort the bridal couple from their room. Then for a long time there is a search for the groomsman, who is nowhere to be found. We wish him to join us in the old-fashioned wedding-game, " Carrying the wood for the Cradle."

Who would have thought that the excited lad was at that moment standing in a room in the priest's house, wearing on his cheek a veritable Alpine glow, while with both hands he was crushing the brim of his hat!

The priest at Holdenschlag — he must be a clever man — walks with dignified steps up and down the room and with a fatherly voice repeats the words: " Control thyself, my son, and pray; lengthen thy evening prayer three times or seven times, if need be. The temptation will leave you at last. Marry? A penniless fellow! What for then? Have you a house and land, servants, children, that you need a wife? Now, then! A beggar to marry? such a folly is not to be thought of. How old are you? "

At this question the lad blushes more deeply than ever. It is so unpardonably stupid not to know one's age. And he does not know it, but he would be right within ten years if he should straightway say twenty.

" Wait until you are thirty; earn a house and land for yourself, and then come again! " is the priest's advice. He now goes into the next room, but Berthold remains standing where he is, feeling as though he must say something more — some weighty word which would overthrow all objections, so that the priest would answer: "Ah, that is quite another thing; then marry, in God's name! " But the lad knows no such word, he is unable to explain and make clear why he wishes to be united, forever united, with Aga, the Alm-maiden.

As the priest does not return from the neighboring room, where he is taking his breakfast, the lad finally turns sadly toward the door and descends the steps, the Jacob's Ladder of his love's happiness, which a short time before he climbed with such joyous confidence.

But having reached the green earth, he is another being. With mad passion he threw himself into the wanton merry-making of the second wedding day.

In the afternoon, man and wife, boy and maiden, depart in couples; Andreas Erdmann joins the old, bearded Rüpel and we all return to the forests of the Winkel.

1815.

Many centuries ago, according to tradition, a people dwelt in this region who supported themselves by farming and hunting. They had shown much forethought in damming up the Winkel, while along its banks were carefully tended green meadows and a wagon road led to the adjoining country. Not far from the place where the master wood-cutter's house now stands the remains of a wall show the spot upon which it is supposed a church once stood. Indeed, the opinion is advanced that it was no church, but the temple of an idol, where it was still the custom to drink mead to Wotan and to sacrifice animals whenever the full moonbeams shimmered through the leaves of the linden. In the same olden time, a snow-white raven would fly down each year from the wastes of the Alps, pick up the corn which had been strewn for it upon a stone, and fly away again. Once, however, no corn was scattered for the bird, because the year had been a hard one, and some one had declared the whole thing to be a foolish superstition. Then the white raven was seen no more. But the winter was scarcely over when from the East savage hordes came streaming hither, with ugly brown faces, wearing blood-red caps and horses' tails, riding strange beasts, and carrying unusual weapons,—they invaded even the Winkel woods. These bands plundered and carried off the inhabitants by the hundreds, and thus the region became deserted.

Then the houses and the temple fell into ruins, the water destroyed the dams and roads and covered the fields with pebbles and stones. The fruit-trees grew wild again; larch-woods sprang up in the meadows. But the larches were afterward supplanted by firs and pines. And thus the dark, high forests, now centuries old, came into existence.

It is not certain whether the present race of foresters are descendants of those ancient people. I rather think that, as the old inhabitants were carried away by a surging flood over the Alps in savage ages, so after many years in the storms of time, remains of other races have been stranded into these forests. Indeed, one can tell by observing the present inhabitants, that this is not their native soil. Notwithstanding, they have been impelled to take root here and to prepare a safe and orderly dwelling-place for their descendants.

However, the old German legends of the wood-gods live on in these people. In the autumn they leave the last wild fruit upon the trees, or decorate their crosses and *Haus-Altäre* with the same, in order to secure fruitfulness for the coming year. They throw bread into the water, when a flood is impending; they scatter meal to the wind to appease threatening storms — even as the ancients sacrificed to the gods. At the sacred hour of twelve they hear the Wild Hunt, even as the ancients heard with terror the thundering of Father Wotan. Instead of Freya of the olden time, they call to mind the beautiful woman who presides at the wedding-feasts, with her two kittens harnessed to a golden wagon. And when the Winkel foresters bury one of their comrades over in Holdenschlag, they empty the cup of mead to his memory. Everywhere still linger the old Germanic superstitions and customs, but above them all is heard the story of the Cross.

To a certain extent the Winkel foresters appreciate what is needed here, but only the few are able to give it a name. However, that root-digger was right when, a year ago at the charcoal-burner's wedding, he said: ‘‘ Neither God nor priest troubles himself about us. We are left to sorrow and the devil. A dog's life is good enough for us; we are only Winkel people!"

But that root-digger may yet live to see my toast fulfilled. Since the wedding I have become a year younger. The foresters of the Winkel are to have a church.

If a nation desires to rise from its barbarism to a perfect, harmonious height, God's temple must form the foundation. Therefore I will begin with the church in the Winkel woods.

I have been obliged to urge and press the matter. Herr von Schrankenheim dwells in his palace in the city, where from every window church bells are heard, while in handsome cases hundreds of books for the mind and heart are displayed. Who, there, imagines what a pulpit and a sound of bells would mean in the distant forest? But at last the proprietor of these lands has comprehended, and today the men are here to examine the site.

Yonder, near the house of the Winkel-warden, straight up from the path which leads across the Winkel, is a piece of high, rocky ground, where neither deep ravine slides nor torrents interfered. It lies between the Upper and Lower Winkel, and is equally distant from the Lautergräben, the Miesenbach valley and the banks of the Kar. That is the right place for God's house. I have presented plans which I think are suitable for such a forest church.

My plans have been accepted. Already roads are being cut through and building materials brought here. In the Bins valley, where clay is found, a brick-kiln has been constructed and at the Breitwand a stone-quarry opened.

The foresters stand and watch the strange workmen. They have their own thoughts about it all.

"They want to build us a church, do they?" says one; "'twould be more sensible to divide the money among the poor. The Lord should build Himself a house if He is unwilling to remain under the open sky or dwell in the Winkel forest."

"I wonder what saint they will set up for us!"

"Saint Hubertus, I think."

"Hubertus,—ah, he carries a rifle and might take to poaching. The hunters would never endure him. I say, the *Vierzehn Nothelfer** would be right for us."

"Not to be thought of; they would cost too much, and besides, the great Christopher is among them, and no church door would be large enough for him."

"To him who wishes to find lost things, Saint Anthony many a wonder brings!" says Rüpel, the old bristly-beard, whose words seem to rhyme, let him twist his tongue as he will.

One little old woman very sagely remarks that, as there is no one in the whole Winkel forest who can play the organ, Saint Cecilia should be chosen as parish saint.

Others wish to dedicate the church to Florian, who protects against fire; but those living by the water prefer Sebastian.

Thereupon an old shepherd responds: "That's no way to talk. The people can help each other; but you mustn't forget the poor cattle! The holy Erhart (patron saint of cattle) would be the one for us in the Winkel."

Another speaks: "I care nothing for the cattle. We need the church for the people. And as long as we have to pay for the saint, we may as well have something fine. I am no heathen; I go to church, and I like a pretty woman. What do you say to St. Magdalen?"

"You wretch," cries his wife, "you would place that wanton upon the altar!"

"You're right, old woman; for such as you, we must have one who will set a *good* example."

So the people argue, half in jest, half in earnest. They have rummaged through the whole heaven and have not found a saint satisfactory to every one.

And we must have one who will suit them all. I have my own idea about it.

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[1] *Vierzehn Nothelfer*, fourteen saints to whom Catholics pray in times of great need.

It is fortunate for me that I am cool-blooded. That one wild year killed the germs of my passion. Now I can bend my whole energy toward this end: out of a scattered, divided people, to form one, united and whole. If I am successful, we shall have something upon which to build. I will found a home for them and myself. But we must first gain the coöperation of the Baron, after which we must influence the woods-people.

Extraordinary strength does not seem to me necessary, but certainly persistent effort. These people are like balls of clay — a push, and they roll along for a while. They will go on of themselves, but they must be guided in order to reach a common goal. There are enough members, but they are self-willed and perverse. When the church is once finished, so that the parish has a heart, we will attend to the head and build the schoolhouse.

Autumn, 1816.

A few weeks ago I visited all the huts, carrying with me a note-book. I questioned the fathers about their households, the number in their families, the year of birth and the names of the people. The birthdays can usually be remembered only by events and circumstances. This boy was born in the summer when the great flood occurred; that girl, the winter when straw bread had to be eaten. Such incidents are memorable landmarks.

Very few know anything of a surname. Some have either lost or forgotten theirs, others have never had any. These people need a special form by which to designate their ancestry and relationship. Hansel-Toni-Sepp! That is a household name and by it is meant, that the owner of the house is called Sepp, whose father was named Toni, and grandfather Hansel. Kathi-Hani-Waba-Mirz-Margareth! Here Kathi was the great-great-grandmother of Margareth. So the race may have existed a long time in the solitude of the forest.

But this confusion cannot continue. The names must be prepared for the parish-book. New surnames will have to be invented and it will not be difficult to choose those which are fitting. We will call the people after their characteristics or occupations; that is easily remembered and preserved for the future. Thus wood-cutter Paul, who married Annamirl, is no longer Hiesel-Franzel-Paul, but briefly Paul Holzer (Woodman), because he transports the tree-trunks upon a slide to the coal-pit, which work is called *wooding*. The tinder-maker and his descendants, do what they will, shall remain Schwammschlager. A hut in the Lautergräben I call Brunnhütte (spring hut), because a large spring flows before it. Why then should the owner of the hut be named Hiesel-Michel-Hiesel-Hannes? He is a Brunnhütter, as well as his wife, and if his son goes out into the world, whatever his occupation, he shall always remain a Brunnhütter.

An old thick-necked dwarf, coal-driver Sepp, has for a long time been called Kropfjodel. I recently asked the little man whether he would be satisfied to be registered in my book under the name of Joseph Kropfjodel. He assented quite willingly. I then explained to him that his children and grandchildren would also be called Kropfjodel. At that he grinned and gurgled, "Let him be called Kropfjodel ten times over, that boy of mine!" And a little later he added mischievously: "The name, thank God, we have that at least! Oh, if we but had the boy!"

When I came to the Alm boy, Berthold, he shocked me greatly. "A name," he screamed, "for me? I need no name, I am nobody. God did not make me a woman, and the priest does not allow me to be a man. Marriage is denied me because I am as poor as a beggar. Call me Berthold *Elend!* (misery). Call me Satan! I know I break the law, but I will not betray my flesh and blood!"

After these words he hastened away like one mad. The lad, once so merry, is hardly to be recognized. I have written the name Berthold in the book and added a cross after it.

Another man wanders about in the Winkel forests, whose name I do not know, or if any he bears; it may be Evil. The man avoids us all, and buries himself often for a long time, one knows not where, then appears again at unusual hours, one knows not why. It is the Einspanig.

May, 1817.

This winter I have suffered from a severe illness, caused by my frequently visiting Marcus Jäger, who had been shot by a poacher in the Lautergräben. As fever threatened to appear in the wound and, as there was no one else who would or could nurse the sick man, I often went over to see him. The people here, instead of cleansing a wound with tepid water and lint, apply all kinds of salves and ointments. It must indeed be a powerful constitution which can recover in spite of such hindrances, and I had a hard struggle keeping Jäger alive.

The last time I was with him was a stormy March day. On the way back the paths were blocked with snow. In places it reached to my shoulders. For a number of hours I struggled along, but as night approached I was still far from the Winkel valley. An indescribable weariness came over me, which I resisted a long time, but at last could not conquer. My only thought was that I must perish there in the midst of the snow, and that I should be found in the spring and be carried past the new church in the Winkel to Holdenschlag. Here in the forest I should like to lie, but I would far rather be walking about in it.

Not until weeks afterward did I know that I was not frozen, that on the same evening two wood-cutters came to meet me on snow-shoes, found me unconscious and carried me into the house of the Winkel-warden; and as I lay for many days seriously ill, it seems that once they even called the doctor from Holdenschlag. The messenger who brought him was also commissioned, as he himself has since told me, to speak at the same time to the grave-digger. The latter said, "If the man would only do me the favor not to die now; one can't dig a hole in this hard, frozen ground."

I am glad that I was able to spare the good man his labor.

After the danger of the illness had passed I was attacked by a serious trouble with my eyes, which has not yet quite left me. For a long time I shall be obliged to remain in my room, indeed until the warm weather comes and the freshets are over. I am not at all lonely, for I busy myself with wood-carving. I intend to make a zither or something of the kind for myself, so that I may practise music till the organ is ready in the church.

The people come often and, sitting down beside me on the bench, inquire after my health. Russ-Annamirl, who has moved with her family into the master wood-cutter's house in the Lautergräben and according to the new order of things is called Anna Maria Russ, sent me three big doughnuts last week. They are some of those which have been baked in great quantities to celebrate the arrival of a wee Russ. They have christened the little one with doughnuts.

The widow of Black Mathes has also been to see me once. She asked me in great sorrow what was to be done with her boy Lazarus. She then told me how he was often attacked by a *frenzy*. A frenzy, she explained, was when one broke out into a passion at the slightest provocation, threatening everything. Lazarus had this malady in a much worse degree than his father; sister and mother would be in danger when he became a little stronger. Was there no remedy for such a trouble?

What can I advise the distressed woman? A continuous, regular employment, and a loving but firm treatment should be given to the lad; that is my proposition.

Of all the people in the Winkel forests, I have the greatest sympathy for this woman. Her husband, after an unfortunate life, died a violent death and was buried dishonorably. Nothing better is in store for the child. And his mother, having seen better days, is so soft-hearted and gentle.

Day before yesterday a boy came to me dragging a bird-cage with him. The lad was so small that he could not even reach the door-handle, so he timidly knocked for a while until I opened the door. Still standing on the steps, he said, "I am the son of Marcus Jäger, and my father sends me here — father sends me here —"

The little rogue had learned the speech by heart, but he stopped short, blushed, and would have liked to make his escape. I had some trouble in discovering that his father's message was that he was entirely well and wished me the same; that soon he would come to thank me, and that he presented me with a pair of fine crested titmice, for, being aware that I could not yet go out of doors, he would be glad to send the whole spring into my room.

What shall I do with the little creatures? If one approaches them, they flutter confusedly about in the cage and beat their heads against the wires in their fright. I let them fly out into our Father's bird-cage, out into the May.

And when the time is finally fulfilled, I myself walk out early one morning into the open May. The cock crows, the morning star is peeping brightly over the dark wooded hill. The morning star is a good companion; it shines faithfully as long as it is night, and modestly retires when the sun appears.

Softly I steal through the front door, so that I may not awaken the people who have not rested for weeks, as I have; the weariness of yesterday still weighs upon their eyelids, which the dawning day is already forcing open.

In the forest there is a trembling, rustling awakening from deep rest. How strange is the first walk of a convalescent! One feels as if the whole earth were rocking one — rocking her newly born child in her arms. O thou holy May morning, bathed in dew and sweet perfumes, trembling and reverberating with eternal thoughts of God! How I think of thee and thy fairy magic, which at this hour hath sunk into my soul from the dome of heaven and the crown of the forest!

And yet I experience a strange sorrow. Youth has been given to me in vain. What is my aim? What do I signify? A short time ago and from eternity I was nothing; a short time hence and through all eternity I shall be nothing. What shall I do? Why am I in this small place, and conscious of myself for this brief period? Why have I awakened? What must I do?

Then I vow to myself anew to work with all my might, and also to pray that such difficult, heart-burning thoughts may not return to me.

As the sun appears, I am still standing on the edge of the woods. Below splashes the water of the Winkel, from the chimney of the house rises a silvery wreath of smoke, and in the church building the masons are hammering.

My housekeeper, having noticed that I was not in my room, reproved me for my carelessness. As soon as she discovered that I had been lying on the damp moss in the cool early morning, she asked me quite seriously if I found it so uncomfortable in her house, or if I had something on my mind that I risked my life in such a way; yes, and did I not know that he who lies down on the dewy ground in the spring is giving his measure to the grave-digger?

Summer Solstice, 1817.

This has been a strange walk in the woods, and I feel that I shall not be able to justify myself either in heaven or on earth for what has happened. Where the little stream splashes in the shadowy defiles of the Winkelegger forest, there I remain standing.

Here upon these ripples let thy thoughts drift without aim or purpose. Thou knowest the Greek legend of the river Lethe. That was a strange water. Whoever drank of it, forgot the past. Still stranger are the waters of the little forest brook. He whose soul floats upon the same, e'en though his locks be wintry, finds again the long past time of his childhood and youth.

I penetrate deeper into the wilderness and rest on the

Permission Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, Stuttgart HANS THOMA

THE VILLAGE VIOLINIST

moss, listening to the ever present murmuring silence. Many a little flower, just opened, is cradled close to my breast, endeavoring to knock softly at the gate of my heart. And many a beetle crawls anxiously up to me, having lost his way to his sweetheart in the thicket of grasses and moss. Now he lifts his head and asks for the right path. Do I know the right path myself? O tell us where is the longing satisfied which follows us everywhere? A spider lets itself down from the branches; it has worked its way to the top, and now that it is there, it wishes to be upon the ground again. It spins threads, I spin thoughts. Who is the weaver who knows how to weave a beautiful garment from loose threads of thought?

While thus dreaming, I hear a rustling in the thicket. It is no deer, it is no doe; it is a human being; a young woman, flushed, excited, and frightened, like a hunted creature. It is Aga, the Alm maiden. She hastens up to me, seizes my hands and cries: "Oh, I am so glad it is you!"

Then she looks at me and stops for breath, unable to overcome her excitement. "It is a horrible fate!" she cries again; "but I know no other way. The Evil One follows us both, and now we fear the people; but I'm not afraid of you, for you are good and learned! I'm sure you will help us out of our trouble, Berthold and me! We should so like to live a decent life; pray give us the marriage blessing!"

At first I do not understand, but, comprehending her at last, I say: "If you are honest in your purpose, the church will not withhold its blessing."

"*Mein Gott im Himmel!*" cries the girl; "with the church we will have nothing more to do; it refuses us marriage because we have no money. But if God should be angry with us, that would be terrible indeed. My conscience gives me no peace, and I beg you a thousand times, give us the blessing which any man may bestow. You are still young yourself, and if you have a sweetheart, you must know there is no parting or leaving one another. And so we live together in the wilderness; we haven't a single soul to be our friend and wish us happiness. We should so like to hear one good word, and if some one would only come and say: 'By God's will and with His blessing remain together until death!' Just a single word, and we should be freed from the sin and a wedded pair before God in heaven!"

This longing for deliverance from their sin, this struggling for the right, for human sympathy, for peace of heart — who would not be moved by that!

"You true-hearted people!" I cry. "May the Lord God be with you."

The lad has already knelt beside the maiden. And so, with my words I have done something which I cannot answer for in heaven or on earth. I have consummated a marriage in the midst of the green woods.

The Feast of St. Peter and St. Paul, 1817.

Strange — what is the matter with this lad, Black Mathes' son! He has his mother's heart and his father's blood. No, he has a still larger heart than his mother's, and is thrice as hot blooded as his father. This boy will become either a saint or a terrible murderer.

Old Russ-Kath has been ill for months. The people say she lacks young blood. Little Lazarus, hearing of it, came to me yesterday with a small wooden bowl and his father's huge pocket-knife, and asked me to draw some blood from his hand to send to Russ-Kath.

His face was flushed, otherwise he was quiet. I chided him for making such a request. He darted away, and soon afterward in the Winkel-warden's yard he was wringing a pigeon's neck: for anger, for love — I cannot tell which.

I went out to the dead creature. "Lazarus," I said, "now you have deprived a mother of her life. Do you see the poor, helpless young yonder? Do you hear how they cry?"

The boy stood there trembling, pale as marble, struggling for breath, and biting his underlip until the blood trickled down his chin. Loosening his clenched fist, I poured water on his forehead and led him back into his hut. There he fell exhausted upon the moss, and sank into a deep sleep.

Something must be done to save the child. How would it do if I should take him, be father and brother to him, curb and guide him according to my strength, train him and keep him at work, seeking in every way to teach him self-control?

But perhaps the boy has too much blood . . . the people say.

The Feast of St. James, 1817.

Today I was in the Hinter Winkel again, in Mathes' house. The woman is inconsolable. Two days ago the boy Lazarus disappeared.

Something horrible has happened. In his rage he hurled a stone at his mother. Then, with a wild cry, he ran away. Upon Mathes' grave the fresh imprints of two knees were discovered yesterday.

We have summoned people to hunt for the boy. He is not in any of the huts. They are also searching along the ravines and streams.

"He didn't mean to hit me!" sobs the mother; "and it was only a *little* stone, but a large one lies upon my heart. He could never have thrown a greater one at me than by running away."

The Feast of St. Peter in Chains, 1817.

The following story has spread like wild-fire through the forest. Early this morning as the little daughter of Mathes was on her way to plant some wild-rose upon her father's grave, she saw the gleam of something white. Upon the mound had been placed a staff from which a piece of paper was fluttering. The girl ran home to her mother, and the latter hastened to me, begging me to come and explain it to her.

It is most remarkable. It is news from the boy. On the paper in strange handwriting were the words:

"My mother and my sister! Bear me no ill-will and do not worry. I am in the school of the Cross.

"Lazarus."

They all looked to me for an explanation. The boy could neither read nor write, as can hardly any one in the forest. They think that I, being learned, ought to know everything.

I know nothing.

The Feast of All Souls, 1817.

The people come and go in silence.

A little drop collects on the high branch of a tree, trickles to the end of the farthest needle, trembles, glistens, and sparkles, now gray like lead, now red like carbuncle. It has hardly reflected the glorious color of the woods and sky, when a breath of wind stirs and the little drop frees itself from the swaying pine-branch and falls upon the ground. The earth sucks it in, and there is no longer a trace of the tiny, sparkling star.

Thus lives the child of the forest and thus it dies.

Out in the world it is otherwise. There the drops congeal in the frosty breath of conventionality, and the icicles tinkle against each other, tinkling even as they fall and rest upon the ground, reflecting for a while the glory of the world until they dissolve and melt, like our thoughts of a dear departed one.

Out in the world, the churchyards are not for the dead, but for the living. There we pay honor to the memory of our forefathers and to our own future resting-place. The flowers and the inscriptions are for us, and we feel peace in our hearts as we think of the sleeper who is freed from trial. We realize the dissolution of the departed but hope for him the resurrection. No one walks upon burial-ground unrewarded; these clods cool the passions and warm the heart, and not only is the peace of death written on the flowery mounds, but also the worth of life.

The forest brings rest to whom rest belongs. There the dead sleeper has no candle, nor has the living one had one.

May the *Everlasting Light* give them light! is our only petition. The faint autumn sun smiles gently, promising eternal brightness, and the coming spring will care for the flowers and wreaths.

In the forest our thoughts are not for the bodies of the dead, but for the agony of the living souls of those who, having died in sin, are languishing in purgatory!

When the starving Hans stole the piece of bread from his starving neighbor in the field and then died, the primeval forest was not yet standing. The body has decayed. Hans is forgotten, his soul lies in purgatory. The meadow has become a forest, the forest a wilderness, the wolves howl and there is no man far or near. On the mountain-sides there are summer breezes and winter storms; and with each moment a grain of sand and with each century a mass of mountain plunges into the depths of the ravines. And still the poor soul lies in the fire. Again man comes into the wilderness, the high forests fall, huts and houses appear and a parish is founded — the soul belonging to olden times and to days long past lies in the flames of purgatory, is abandoned and forgotten.

But there is one day in the year for the consolation of such forgotten souls.

When Christ, the Lord, died upon the cross and but one drop of blood was left in His heart, His Heavenly Father asked Him: " My dear Son, mankind is redeemed; to whom wilt Thou give the last drop of Thy red blood?" Then Christ, the Lord, answered: " To my beloved mother, who stands at the cross that her pain may be soothed." " Oh no, my child Jesus," the Mother Mary replied, " if Thou wilt suffer the bitter death for the souls of men, then can I also bear the pain of a mother's heart, e'en though the agony were so great that the sea could not quench it, and the whole earth a grave which could not bury it. I give the last drop of Thy blood to the forgotten souls in purgatory, that they may have one day in the year, when they are freed from the fire."

And thus — according to the legend — originated All Souls' Day. On this day even the most abandoned and forgotten souls are delivered from their pain and they stand in the outer courts of heaven, until the stroke of the last hour in the day summons them back into the flames.

Such is the idea and meaning of the feast of All Souls' in the forest, and many a good deed is performed with the thought of soothing the fiery anguish of departed souls.

But over the lonely graves the late autumn mists are gathering, and the remainder of the hill is concealed by newly fallen snow, upon which the claws of a jay may have traced a little chain — the only sign of life which still reigns up here — a symbol of the indissoluble band: About life and death an eternal chain is wound.

There is a grave in the Winkel forests, known and despised by the people. On this anniversary day, however, it was not deserted. For here, upon her father's grave, the little daughter of Black Mathes again discovered a bit of paper with the words:

"I am well. I think of my mother and sister and father.

"Lazarus."

That is the message, the only news from the vanished boy for many days. The handwriting is the same as before.

No footsteps excepting those of the girl lead to the grave, none away from it. Paths for foxes, and deer, and other animals wind zig-zaging through the wintry woods.

The Feast of St. Catharine, 1817.

A letter has been written begging the lad to return home for his mother's sake. It has been carefully fastened upon the little cross above the grave. It is still there; no one has opened it.

Christmas, 1817.

Today I am homesick for the sound of bells, for the sad, melting tones of an organ. I sit in my room and play Christmas songs on the zither. My zither has but three strings; a more perfect one I did not know how to make.

The three strings are enough for me; one is my mother, the other my wife, the third my child. One always spends Christmas with one's family.

Only a few of the forest people go with pine-torches to the midnight service in Holdenschlag. The distance is too great. The rest remain in their huts, yet, having no desire to sleep, they sit together and tell stories, for today they have a peculiar impulse to leave their everyday life and create a world of their own. Many a one carries out old pagan customs, hoping thereby to satisfy an unspeakable longing of the heart. Many a one strains his eyes and gazes over the dark forests, confidently expecting to see the heavens illumined. He listens for the ringing of festival bells and soft angel voices. But only the stars gleam above the wooded hills, today as yesterday and always. A cold breeze stirs among the tree-tops; there is a glitter of ice, and now and then a branch shakes off its burden of snow.

But on this night the glistening and falling of the snow affect one in an unusual way, and the hearts of men tremble in longing expectation of the Redeemer.

I have trimmed a simple little Christmas-tree, such as they have in northern countries, and have sent the same to Anna Maria Russ in the Lautergräben. I think the light of the candles will be reflected in a friendly way in the eyes of her little one. Perhaps a bit of the brightness will sink into the young heart, never to be extinguished.

In the widow's hut, there can be no Christmas-tree. Mathes' grave is buried deep in snow; the branch which served as letter-box wears a pointed hood. The pleading letter from the mother to the child will be destroyed by the snow without having been opened or read.

March, 1818.

Over in one corner of the Karwässer Berthold has earned himself a hut. He has joined the wood-cutters.

Yesterday a child was born to Aga. It is a girl. They did not carry the little one to Holdenschlag, but sent for me to christen her. I am no priest and may not steal a name from the church calendar. I have called the girl *Waldlilie* (Forest Lily) and have baptized her with the water of the woods.

A Few Days Later.

That must be a false report which is circulating about the Baron's son. He is said to have become dissipated. Too much wealth was awaiting him when he came into this world. But with an illustrious name and an abundance of money, no wonder life is full of attractions!

Ah, if he would only come into our beautiful, silent forest!

MORGENROT AND EDELWEISS

Summer, 1818.

It is sometimes very lonely for me here in the Winkel. But I know one remedy for this; at such times I go to still lonelier parts of the forest; I have been there even at night, have watched sleeping nature, and have found rest.

Night lies over the woodland. The last breath of the day that has passed has died away. The birds are resting and dreaming, at the same time composing songs for the future. The screech-owl hoots, and the branches sigh. The earth has closed her eyes, yet her ear she opens to the eternal laments of mankind. To what purpose? Her heart is of stone and impossible to warm. Ah, but she warms us with her peaceful aspect. Above, constellation presses against constellation, dances its measure and rejoices in the everlasting day. The morning returns to the forest again, the branches are already beckoning to it.

The sun-king approaches from the east upon his steeds of cloud and with his flaming lance pierces the heart of night; and night plunges into the dusky gorges, and from rocky heights streams her blood.

Alpine glow the people call it, and if I were a poet I would celebrate it in song.

At this season it would be beautiful on the Graue Zahn.

At night, while below in the dark valley man rests from toil, dreams of toil, and strengthens himself for new toil — the eternal spires tower aloft, silently glowing, and at midnight one day reaches its hand to the next across the Zahn.

"Oh, what a beautiful light is that!" old Rüpel once exclaimed. "To distant lands it sends its ray, its rosy splendor fills my heart, to God above it lights my way."

A strange yearning sometimes fills my soul; it is not a longing for space, for infinity; thirst for light would better express it. My poor eyes can never satisfy the thirsting soul; they will yet perish in the sea of light and the thirst be still unquenched.

A short time since I was on the Graue Zahn again. Soon I shall be tied to the bell-rope when other people are making holiday. The bell-rope may be compared to a long-drawn breath, always praising God and proclaiming good-will to man.

From the high mountain I gazed below, but I did not behold the sea. I looked toward the north to the farthest horizon, whence one might perhaps see the plain and the city, the turret of *her* house, and the gleam of *her* windows. . . . And how far would my gaze have to wander to find the grave in Saxonland! . . .

A sharp wind interrupted my thoughts. Then I once more made my descent.

Beside an overhanging cliff I found something very beautiful.

On the banks of the distant lake I had already heard this tale from my parents, and I have heard it from the people of these woodlands, that in the midst of the sun the holy Virgin Mary sits at the spinning-wheel. She spins wool from a snow-white lamb, like those pastured in paradise. Once while spinning, she fell asleep and dreamed of the human race, and a bit of the wool falling to the earth remained clinging to a high cliff. The people found it and called it *Edelweiss*.

I picked two of the little stars and placed them on my breast. One of them, which has a slightly reddish tinge, shall be called *Heinrich-rot*, the other, snow-white, that . . . I will leave its old name.

As toward evening I descend to the forest and the wood-cutting, I chance upon something unspeakably lovely. There, not far from my path, I see a bed of fresh green grass; its perfume is so inviting, that I think I will rest my weary limbs upon it for awhile. And as I approach the grassy couch, I behold a babe sleeping thereon. A flower-like, tender babe wrapped in linen. I remain standing and hold my breath that I may not cry out in astonishment and thus waken the little creature. I can scarcely imagine how it happens that this helpless young child should be in this isolated place at such an hour. Then it is all explained. Up from the Thalmulde a load of grass comes swaying toward me, and under it Aga is panting. She is gathering fodder for her goats, and the child is her little daughter — my Forest Lily.

The woman now takes the grass on her back and the child on her arm, and together we proceed down the valley. The same evening, I entered her hut and drank goat's milk. Berthold came home late from his wood-cutting. These people lead a hard life; but they are of good courage, and the young Waldlilie is their happiness.

As Berthold sees the *Edelweiss* on my breast he says, with a warning gesture: "Take care, that is a dangerous weed!" As I fail to understand, he adds: "*Edelweiss* nearly killed my father and *Edelweiss* almost poisons my love for my dead mother."

"How so, how so, Berthold?" I ask.

He then related the following story to me: "On the other side of the Zahn, beyond the abyss, lived a young forester, who loved a herdsmaid. She was a proud lass and one day she said to the young man, 'I love you and wish to be yours, but one proof of your true love you must give to me. You are a nimble climber, will you refuse, if I ask for an *Edelweiss* from the high cliff?'

'My dearest, an *Edelweiss* you shall have!' exclaimed the lad, but he forgot that the high cliff was called the Teufelsberg, because it was impossible to climb, and that at its foot stood tablets telling of root-diggers and chamois-hunters who had perished there. And the herdsmaid did not realize that she was demanding a new tablet.

But it is very true that love drives one mad. The young forester started on the same day.

He climbs the lower cliff, over which the wood-cutter is still obliged to walk with his ax; he ascends crags where the root-digger digs his spikenard; he swings himself over ravines and rocks where the chamois-hunter scarcely dares to venture. And finally he reaches that horrible place on the Teufelsberg, with the yawning abyss below and the perpendicular crags above.

Upon a neighboring crag a chamois is standing, which spiritedly raises its head and looks mockingly across at the lad. It does not flee, up here the game becomes the hunter and man the helpless game. The chamois scrapes the ground with its fore-foot, and flaky bits fly into the air . . . *Edelweiss.*

The lad well knows that he must shade his eyes to keep from becoming dizzy. He well knows that if he looks up the rocky wall above, it will be farewell to the light of heaven; and if his eye glances downward it will gaze into his grave.

Not the chamois, but the ground upon which it stands, is the object of his quest today. He thrusts his alpenstock into the earth and turns and swings himself. A blue mist rises before his eyes. Sparks appear, circle, and fade away. He no longer sees aught but the smile of the herdsmaid. Now he throws his stick away, now he jumps and makes long leaps. With a start the chamois springs wildly over his head and the young man sinks upon the white bed of *Edelweiss.*

On the second day after this, the head forester sent to ask the people if the lad had been seen. On the third day they saw the herdsmaid running in the woods with disheveled hair. And on the evening of the same day the young forester walked through the valley leaning upon a staff.

How he came down from the Teufelsburg he told no one, perhaps he could not tell. He had *Edelweiss* with him — a bunch on his breast — a wreath on his head; his hair had become snow-white — *Edelweiss.*

And the herdsmaid, who in her wilfulness had caused this to happen to the brown curly head, now loved and cherished the white locks until years later her own had become white as well.''

Berthold told the story almost beautifully and finally he added that he was the child of the young forester and the herdsmaid.

Autumn, 1818.

After wandering through other parts of the forest among the people both old and young, learning from the former, teaching the latter, I am always glad to return to the Winkel. Here in these last years, the people have been laboring with ax and hammer about the Winkel-warden's house and I have sometimes even lent a hand to the work myself. And now as I look around me I realize that we have a village.

The parsonage is approaching completion, likewise the church and next comes the schoolhouse; — *Mein Gott,* what a great joy I am experiencing in these forests!

Upon the Road to the Cross, Autumn, 1818.

Above, in the wastes of the Felsenthal, stands a wooden cross. It is the same which is said to have grown from the seed of a little bird that flies into the valley every thousand years.

I consulted with the forester and a few of the older men, and I afterward asked the old bearded story-teller Rüpel, who had no other important business, if he would go with me to the Karwässer and into the Felsenthal to help bring down the moss-covered cross into the Winkel.

And so we start one bright autumn morning. We are both unspeakably happy. We thank the shady Winkel brook for its splashing and gurgling. We thank the green meadow for its verdure; we thank the dew, the birds, the deer, and the whole forest. We ascend the slippery floor of the woods, we clamber over moldering trunks and mossy stones. The trees are old and wear long beards, and our story-teller stands on a fraternal footing with each one.

After many hours we finally arrive in the Felsenthal. As we walk along the jagged walls, where in the clefts fear slumbers, and as we see the cross towering in the midst of the moldering trunks, my companion imagines that he sees a human figure disappearing among the rocks. But with the exception of our two selves I notice no one.

Before the cross we pause. It towers upon the boulder as it towered years ago, as according to the legend of the people, it has stood since time immemorial. Storms have passed over it and have loosened the bark from the wood, though they have done it no further injury. But the warm sunny days have made fissures in the beam.

As we climb upon the rock to remove the cross, Rüpel covers his face with both hands. " We are destroying the altar in Felsenkar," he cries excitedly. " Where shall the tree in the storm now pray, and the hunted deer that roams astray, on the forest's edge, with the cross away? "

My own hand trembles as we take up our burden. I place it so that the horizontal beam rests upon my neck like a yoke, Rüpel carrying the upright beam behind.

The whole night we walk through the forest. In the ravines and narrow defiles the darkness is appalling, and our cross crashes against many an old tree-trunk. When our path leads over rising ground, the moonlight shimmers through the branches, revealing the white mosaics and hearts which lie upon the earth.

Many times we lay down our burden and wipe the sweat from our brows; we speak very little with one another.

Once, while we are thus resting, a dark figure glides by us across the way. It stretches out one hand, pointing to a broad stone, and then disappears. We both notice this apparition, but do not speak until on the meadow of the Karwässer we place the cross upright on the ground, its dark shadow peacefully resting upon the dewy grass; then the old man utters these words: "He bore the cross unto the mount — our Lord — in bitter grief, and stopped to rest upon a stone, and, resting, found relief. A Jew stepped out and said: 'This stone belongs to me.' The Saviour staggered on in pain, the Jew must ever flee; he cannot die, but e'en today, there is no rest at hand — from age to age, in fiery shoes, he roams from land to land."

At the coal-pit in the upper Lautergräben, four men await us. Taking the cross, they lay it upon a bier of green saplings and proceed with it toward the Winkel.

As we approach our valley the day is breaking. And sounds come and tremble through the air, which are not to be compared with song of man, lute, or any earthly music. It is many years since I have heard a sound like that, and I scarcely recognize it. We all stop and listen; it is the bell of our new church.

While we were in the Felsenthal, the bells had arrived and were hung.

Kirmes, 1818.

It is Sunday — the first Sunday in the Winkel forests. The bells announced it at dawn, and the people have come from the Upper Winkel, from Miesenbach, from the Lautergräben, from the Karwässer, and from every hermitage and cave of the wide woods. Today they are no longer wood-cutters and charcoal-burners, or whatever they may chance to be; today for the first time they fuse into one, into one body, and are called the parish.

The church is finished. Above the altar towers the cross from the Felsenthal; it stands here as unpretentiously and almost as harmoniously as yonder in its loneliness. Among the people remarks are heard to the effect that this is the true cross of the Saviour. If they find comfort and exaltation in this thought, then it is as they say.

The name of the parish has already been decided upon. The settlement of this question would have been a welcome occasion for the people to assemble at the new tavern to christen the parish with *Schnapps.* But we baptize with water. Our water is called the Winkel; since time immemorial a bridge has led across this stream. The square about the Winkel-warden's house is briefly called *Am Steg* (By the bridge). Here stands the new church, and Winkelsteg shall it and the parish be called. Our master, Baron von Schrankenheim, has indorsed the name.

As the bells were rung at the beginning of our church consecration, so they rang again at its close. On this day another very exciting occurrence has taken place. The clergy from Holdenschlag and the forester had left; it was quiet once more in Winkelsteg. Twilight comes on early now and the mist lay over the high mountains. It was already dark when I went to my bells. Today for the first time the little red lamp was burning before the altar, which from now on shall be our sanctuary lamp, and which shall never be extinguished as long as the house of God remains standing. It is the watch before the Lord.

As I entered the church I beheld a figure in the shadow by the altar-rail. A man still knelt there, praying. If one must live so long in the misery of the day, the Sunday which follows, when one is communing with the dear God or with one's self, is much too short. As the figure became aware of my presence, it rose and sought to escape. It may not be a worshipper, I thought, seizing the fugitive and looking him in the face. It was a young lad.

"You rascal, you may well blush!" I cried. Then I looked at him closely. Who should it prove to be but Lazarus, Adelheid's lost son!

Striking my hands together, I uttered a cry, as I stood there in the church.

“ Boy, for God’s sake tell me where you have been! We have hunted for you, your mother would even have overturned the Alps to find you. And how do you come here today, Lazarus? Indeed, this is beyond all belief! ”

The boy stood there and to my questions he answered nothing — not one word.

Then I rang the bells. Lazarus was standing near me; his garment was composed of a woollen blanket, his hair fell over his shoulders, and his countenance was very pale. He watched me, for he had never seen bells rung before. And what a glad heart was mine! Now, with a clear ringing tongue, I could proclaim the event even out into the mountains.

Finally my housekeeper came asking what might be the meaning of the ringing of the bells; a half dozen times she had already repeated the Ave Maria, and still I did not stop.

I let go of the bell-rope and pointed to the boy. “ See, he has finally come back. Did you not understand the ringing? Lazarus is found.”

A woman is better than any bell to spread such news. Scarcely had the Winkel-warden’s wife gone out screaming, when Lazarus was already surrounded by people. I hardly knew how to tell the story, and the lad murmured now and then, “ Paulus! ” Not another word did he utter.

We asked him who Paulus might be? Instead of answering the question, he said with a peculiarly shy look: “ He led me here to the cross.” Then loudly and anxiously he called out, “ Paulus! ” His speech was awkward, his voice strange.

We led him into the house; the housekeeper placed something to eat before him. Sadly he gazed at the food, turned his head in all directions, and always back again to the dish which he did not touch.

We all of us urged him to eat. He stretched his thin hands out from his rough mantle toward his plate, but drew them back again. The boy trembled and began to sob.

Later he asked for a piece of bread, which he swallowed ravenously. His black locks fell over his eyes and he did not brush them aside. Finally he dipped the bread into the water-jug and ate with increasing greed and drank the water to the last drop.

We stood around watching him, and we shook our wise heads, asking many questions; the lad heard nothing and stared at the pine-torch which gleamed on the wall, or out of the window into the darkness.

The same night Grassteiger and I took the boy to his mother in the upper woods. A few times he sought to escape from us and to climb up the slopes of the dark forest. He was as dumb as a mole and as shy as a deer.

We reached Mathes' house, which is called the Black Hut. Profound peace reigned everywhere. The little stream was murmuring before the door; the branches of the pine-trees groaned above the roof. In the night one listens to such things; in the daytime there is, if one might so express it, the continuous noise of the light, so these other sounds are seldom noticed.

Grassteiger holds the boy by the hand. I place myself at a little window and call in through the paper pane: "Adelheid, wake up a bit!"

Then follows a slight noise and a timorous request to know who is without.

"Andreas Erdmann from Winkelsteg is here and two others!" I say. "But do not be frightened. In the new church a miracle has been performed. The Lord has awakened Lazarus!"

In the hut a red gleam dances up and down the walls, like a feeble flash of lightning. The woman has blown a bit of wood into a blaze at the fire on the hearth.

She lights us in at the door, but as she sees the boy, the torch falls to the floor and is extinguished.

When I finally procure a light, the woman is leaning against the door-post and Lazarus is lying on his face. He moans. Grassteiger lifts him to his feet and brushes the hair from his brow. Adelheid stands almost motionless in her poor night-dress; but in her breast there is a great commotion. Pressing both hands against her breast, she turns toward the wall struggling for breath, until I fear she may faint. At last she looks at the boy and says: "Are you really here, Lazarus?" And to us: "Sit down on the bench yonder, I will get you something to eat directly!" And again to the boy: "Take off your wet shoes, my son!"

But he has no shoes; instead he wears but soles made from the bark of trees.

The woman goes to the bed, wakes the little girl, telling her to rise quickly for Lazarus has come. The child begins to cry.

The soup stands ready; the boy stares with his large eyes at the table and at his mother. Now at last her maternal love bursts forth: "My child, you do not know me! Yes, I have grown old, more than a hundred years! Where have you been this endless time! *Jesu Maria!*" She snatches the child to her breast.

Lazarus gazes downward; I notice how his lips quiver, but he does not weep and he utters not a word. He must have had some strange experience; his soul lies under a ban.

As he now removes his coarse blanket, to climb upon the freshly made bed, he takes out from under this rough mantle a handful of gray pebbles and with one movement strews them all over the floor. Hardly has he done this before he stoops and begins to collect them again. He counts them in his hand, then seeking in all the cracks and corners, he carefully picks up each pebble, counts them once more and hunts further, looking with great calmness a long time at the floor of the hut, until he finds the last one and has the full number in his hand. And now we see the lad smile for the first time. Then replacing the little stones in the pocket of his cloak he goes to bed, where he soon falls asleep.

We stand a long time by the hearth near the torch discussing the miraculous change which has taken place in this boy.

February, 1819.

How does it concern me? It does not concern me in the least, yet I cannot cease thinking of what the forester has told about our young Baron.

The trouble began with a weakening of his constitution and was aggravated by loose and careless play, extravagance, drinking bouts, and sprees. "Bah! I am a baron, a millionaire, a handsome young man; so go ahead!" Thus the forester explained it. Ah, but he cannot be so sure that the story is true.

Hermann is said to be in the capital, far from home and his sister. Yes, under such circumstances anything might indeed be possible. God protect you, Hermann! It would be a reproach to me, the schoolmaster, if my first pupil should be a—

Away, ugly word! Hermann is a good young man. What does the forester know about it?

Spring, 1819.

The region is changing rapidly. The mountains are becoming gray and bare; the forest is being burned over and there are smoking charcoal-pits in all the valleys.

With a great effort I have induced them to leave a little plot of ground up there on the knoll.

This is the last bit of the primeval forest, and in its shade the dead Winkelstegers shall rest.

The parsonage is finished. The parish has advertised for a priest. When the notice is read it will cause amusement: "That will be a fine sort of a curacy in this Winkelsteg: the communion wine is cider, the bread is made of oat-flour. Well, if the priest starves in Winkelsteg, it is his own fault, for he can at least eat the bark of trees! Even the wildcats manage to keep alive on that."

Winkelsteg is terribly maligned; but it is not so bad here after all. For caring for the church and occasionally mounting the pulpit to read something for the edification of the people, I receive a plentiful supply of meal and game. They say it is a pity that I am not a priest.

From the owner of the forest money has been sent as a thank-offering to establish a service in the church at Winkelsteg and to celebrate mass. The daughter of the house is married.

Thank God that my body and my brain find such an abundance of things to be done. This Einspanig is the cause of much speculation.

More and more often he is seen in this place; bent like a living interrogation point, he goes about bent and crooked, But he still avoids the people; and yet when one has the courage to ask him a question he gives an answer that would suffice for three. He has also been seen in the church, in the farthermost corner, where the confessional is to stand.

Old Rüpel is quite sure that he is the Wandering Jew. That the Einspanig is so in part I can well believe. According to my theory, there are many million Wandering Jews.

Summer, 1819.

Now, all at once, we have a priest, and such a strange one, one as mysterious as our altar-piece,—the cross from the Felsenthal.

At noontide the last day of July, I entered the church to ring the bells. There, on the upper step of the altar, stood the Einspanig, reading mass.

I watched him for awhile. Even the priest from Holdenschlag could have done it no better. But when he had finished, and had solemnly descended the steps, and with downcast eyes walked toward the door, I felt it my duty to intercept him and call him to account. "Sir," I said, "you enter this house of God, as any one with an upright heart may do; but you ascend to the holiest place and do those things which are not fitting for every one. I am the keeper of this church and must ask you what your action means."

He stood there looking at me with great calmness.

"Good friend," he then replied, with a voice which

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DANCING CHILDREN

rattled and grated as if rusty; " the question is short and easy, the answer long and difficult. But since you have the right to demand it, it is my duty to give it. Name the day when you will go up to the three pines in the Wolfsgrube."

He bowed and walked away.

[" Einspanig " ' The Lonely One,' the Father Paulus of the story, had had a tempestuous and stormy life, even after entering the priesthood and the order of the Society of Jesus. In his passionate youth he had drunk life's sweetest cups and drained its bitterest dregs of guilt and shame. All the efforts he had made to blot out the past were unavailing. The penances of the Church, the fiery, fanatical zeal with which he had sought to regenerate men, the hard, uncompromising attitude toward self and his fellows, left him unredeemed, wretched and in despair, till, at last, he sought refuge in solitude and loneliness. There in the School of the Cross, he found peace in self denial and service. It was in that school that Lazarus became his pupil and " first fruit."]

May, 1820.

Here in the woods are day and night, winter and summer, peace and suffering, care and sometimes a little comfort in resting from our toil. And so it drags along. Our Chariot of Time has lost its fourth wheel, and it often goes badly and unevenly, but it goes.

For a time the destruction of the forest has ceased; the foundries outside are closed. People are now beginning to remove the stumps from the cleared land and to convert it into fields for planting. The wood-cutters and charcoal-burners are becoming tillers of the soil. That is right; the wood-cutter disappears, but the farmer rises in his place.

Pentecost, 1820.

Today the hermit from the Felsenthal stood before the altar of our church and read mass.

The church vestments and sacred utensils we had from

Holdenschlag, as they were lying there in the vestry unused. The mice had eaten holes in the robe, but the spiders had woven them together again.

I played the organ. The church is not so large but that from the choir one can see if tears are standing in the eyes of the priest at the altar.

The people prayed little and whispered much. This Einspanig — he must indeed be a second St. Jerome.

After the service the forest singer said these words to me: "Have you seen the Wandering Jew? For the suffering Christ he has borne today the heavy cross to Golgotha's heights. Hosanna, he thus casts his sins away!"

I repeated the words to the hermit, adding: "May they make you happy; the man is filled with the Holy Ghost!"

The Feast of All Souls, 1820.

I have urged the people to choose a chief officer from among themselves, that there may be some one to issue orders, settle disputes, and keep the parish united.

They have chosen Martin Grassteiger, and he is now called Judge.

At this same meeting the new Judge introduced the future schoolmaster of the Winkelsteg parish, who had been acknowledged as such by the master of the forest.

I then am this schoolmaster. The people declare that they had known it for a long time, but Grassteiger says that everything must be done according to legal form.

A few days after the above occurrence the Judge ordered me to call a parish meeting to elect a priest. Every one laughed over this. "Shall we choose him from among the pitch-makers and charcoal-burners? But there isn't one that would be fit for it, though any man would be learned enough for us Winkelers."

We must help ourselves, the owner of the forest has said; and that we have done.

The hermit from the Felsenthal is now the priest of Winkelsteg.

The Feast of St. Martin, 1820.

Russ-Kath is dead. She was ninety years old. Her last wish was that after her death strong, nailed shoes should be put on her feet; she would be obliged to traverse the road back to earth many times to see how her children and grandchildren were faring. And the road was full of sharp thorns.

Russ-Kath is the first one who will rest in our new forest burying-ground.

We Winkelstegers have no grave-digger. We could not maintain one, and besides no one dies here until his last groschen is spent. So a few wood-cutters are obliged to come and do this work. They charge nothing for it. They are glad if they can crawl out of the grave again, well and hearty.

During the mass for the dead the coffin stood quite alone upon the hard ground before the church. A little bird flew hither, hopped upon the coffin-lid and pecked and pecked and then fluttered away again.

After the mass we carried Russ-Kath up to the grave which had been prepared for her. The family stood about gazing fixedly into it.

When the burial service was over, the priest spoke briefly. The words which impressed me the most were these: "By the death of our dear ones we gain fortitude to bear the adversities of this life, and a calm, perhaps even a joyous, anticipation of our own death. Each hour is one step toward our meeting again; and until that gate of reunion is opened for us, our departed ones live on in the sacred peace of our hearts."

He is well able to expound it. Indeed, we all feel it also, but do not know the words by which to express it. He has not forgotten his vocation, although he has lived for years up in the Felsenthal.

When we, the priest and I, had thrown a few clods of earth upon the coffin, Russ-Bartelmei, very sad, came to us and asked what his mother had done that we should fling dirt after her. We then explained to him that it signified a last act of love, and that earth was the only offering which one could bestow upon the dead.

Thereupon Bartelmei began to shovel in the earth until not a trace of the white coffin could be seen, and the people took the spade from him to fill the grave.

After the funeral they retired to Grassteiger's inn, where they refreshed themselves with brandy, just as the ancients offered libations after laying their dead to rest.

The little grave in the burying-ground was scarcely closed when the baptismal font in the church was opened. The first death and the first baptism in one day — in one family.

Over the same forest path where a few hours before the coffin was carried, two women brought a new-born babe from the Lautergräben.

The child is a granddaughter of Russ-Kath and belongs to Anna Maria.

Some one knocks at the church door, requesting baptism, and the name of the child is to be Katharina. Her grandmother's name shall not be denied her, although we have the choice of all the saints in heaven.

Winter, 1830.

During all the sixteen years since I have been in the Winkel forests, I have seen no such snow as we have this winter. For days not a single child has come to school. The windows of my room resemble battlements. Should this state of things last much longer, we shall all be snowed in together. From here to the parsonage a path is shoveled twice a day, passing by Grassteiger's house, where we, the priest and I, take our midday meal. Each prepares his own breakfast at home. In the evening we always meet either at the parsonage or at the schoolhouse.

I wonder how the people are faring over at the Karwässer and the Gräben! There the snow-storms are much more furious than in the Winkel. Just now many poor souls are lying sick in their huts, and it is impossible to keep the paths open, so that the people may help one another.

The priest has engaged all the workmen that are accessible to make paths in the Lautergräben, in the Karwässer, and even from one hut to another. They succeeded in breaking the path in one direction, but were obliged to perform their labor a second time on their return. However, the snow-bound people over there will not suffer; their world is within their huts.

Today the priest bound snow-shoes on his feet in order to make visits among the sick. But the snow was too soft, and he was obliged to turn back. Now he is making up little bundles from our landlord's stores, and some sturdy wood-cutters are to carry them to the sick people in the Lautergräben.

These are short days and yet so long. I have my zither, I have the new violin given to me by the priest on my last birthday, I have other things with which to distract myself. But now nothing interests me. For hours at a time I walk up and down the room and wonder what the outcome of this winter will be. There are many huts in the Gräben where the men have not been with their shovels. We are anxious about the condition of things over there.

In order to relieve myself from the oppressive inactivity, I opened today the chest which is under the bench by the stove, and took out the leaves of my old journal, to see what had been the fortunes of this parish since its beginning.

I find that nothing has been written for ten years. There may have been reasons for this interruption in my records. I no longer felt the need of writing out my thoughts and feelings, for in our priest I have found a friend in whom I can confide unreservedly, as he has confided in me, telling me the strange story of his life before we were even acquainted. He is one of the few who, refined by suffering, have emerged from the entanglements and mistakes of the world pure and noble. The woods-people love him devotedly; he leads them not by words alone but by his deeds. His Sunday sermons he puts into practice during the week. He sacrifices himself, he is everything to the people. His hair is no longer black, as at that time in the Felsenthal; his face is earnest, and bright as the gleam of a rainbow. Those who are sorrowful gaze into his eyes and find comfort there.

A number of years ago the church authorities brought up the question of our parish, and refused to recognize our Father Paulus, wishing to install a new priest in his place. Oh! but the Winkelstegers rebelled against such a change and the attempt was finally abandoned. To offset this, however, Winkelsteg is not acknowledged outside as parish and curacy, but simply as a settlement of half-savage, outcast men, such as it was in former times.

WALDLILIE IN THE SNOW

Winter, 1830.

We are relieved of a great anxiety. The storm has subsided. A light wind has arisen and gently released the trees from their burden. There have been a few mild days, during which the snow has settled and with snow-shoes we can now walk where we please.

But during this time a curious incident has taken place over in the Karwässer. Berthold, whose family increases from year to year, while their supply of food grows less, has taken to poaching. The Holdenschlag priest understands life better than I, who have always been swayed by sentiment, and says poor people should not marry. According to conventional ideas and customs, Berthold and Aga are not married, but they have knelt before me in the woods * * * and — now the whole family is starving. Am I responsible? No, no, the blessing which I gave them was of no significance! Oh, my God, Thine is the power;

as in my youth I have already committed one crime, grant that *this* may not prove to be one as well.

So Berthold has become a poacher. The profits of woodcutting do not go far in a house full of children. I have sent him what I can in the way of food. Whenever he wishes a nourishing broth for his sick wife and a bit of meat for the children, he shoots the deer that come in his way. And as misfortune often changes one's character, Berthold who, as herder, was such a good and happy lad has, through poverty, defiance and love for his family, grown to be a lawbreaker.

I have already begged the forester to be lenient to the poor man, as far as possible, assuring the former that Berthold would certainly improve and that I would be responsible for him. But up to the present time there has been no change for the better; and that which has happened during these wild winter days has made him weep aloud, for he loves his Waldlilie above everything.

It is a dark winter evening. The windows are banked up with moss; outside, the fresh flakes fall upon the old snow. Berthold is staying with the children and the sick Aga, until the eldest daughter, Lili, shall return with the milk, which she has gone to beg from a neighbor in Hinterkar. For the goats in the house have been killed and eaten; and as soon as Lili arrives, it is Berthold's intention to go up into the forest with his gun. In such weather one need not seek far to find the deer.

But it grows dark and Lili has not yet returned. The fall of snow becomes heavier and denser; night approaches, and still no Lili. The children are already crying for their milk; the father is eager for game; the mother raises herself in bed. "Lili!" she cries. "Child, where are you straying in this pitch-dark forest? Come home!"

How can the weak voice of the invalid reach the ear of the wanderer through the wild snow-storm?

The darker and stormier the night becomes, the stronger is Berthold's longing for venison and the deeper his anxiety for his Waldlilie. She is a delicate twelve-year-old girl; to be sure she knows the paths and the ravines, but the former are covered with snow, the latter concealed by the darkness.

Finally, the man leaves the house to seek for his child. For hours he wanders about calling through the storm-swept wilderness; the wind blows the snow into his eyes and mouth; he is obliged to use all his strength to regain the hut.

And now two days pass; the storm abates and Berthold's hut is nearly snow-bound. They comfort themselves with the thought that Lili is surely with the neighbor. This hope is shattered on the third day, when, after a long struggle through the drifts, Berthold at last succeeds in reaching the neighbor's hut.

Lili had indeed been there three days ago and had started in good time on her homeward way with her jug of milk.

"My Waldlilie lies buried in the snow!" Berthold cries. He then goes to the other wood-cutters and begs — as no one has ever heard this man beg before — that they will come and help him seek for his dead child.

On the evening of the same day they find Waldlilie.

In a wooded ravine, in a dark tangled thicket of young firs and pines, through which no flake of snow can force itself and above which the mass of snow has piled and drifted, so that the young trees groan with the weight, upon the hard pine-needles on the ground, surrounded by a family group of six deer, sits the sweet, pale Waldlilie.

It was a most marvelous occurrence. The child had lost herself in the ravine on her way home, and, as she could no longer face the drifting snow, she crept into the dry thicket to rest. But she was not long alone. Her eyes had scarcely begun to close, before a herd of deer, old and young, joined her; they sniffed about the girl and gazed at her with their mild eyes full of intelligence and sympathy, for of this human being they were not afraid. They remained with her, lay near her upon the ground, nibbled the trees, licked one another, apparently undisturbed by her presence; the thicket was their winter home.

The next day the snow had enveloped them all. Waldlilie sat in the dim light and drank the milk which she was to have carried to her family, nestling against the good creatures to keep from freezing in the chilling air.

Thus the terrible hours passed. And just as Waldlilie was about to lay herself down to die and in her simplicity was begging the deer to remain faithfully by her side in the last hour, they suddenly began sniffing in a most curious manner, raising their heads and pricking up their ears; then with wild leaps and startled cries they burst through the thicket, scattering in all directions.

The men forced their way through the snow and underbrush and with a shout of joy discovered the child, while old Rüpel, who was also there, called out: " Did I not say, come here, come here, for we may find her with the deer! "

Thus it happened; and when Berthold heard how the creatures of the forest had saved his little daughter and had kept her from freezing, he cried out wildly: " I will never do it again as long as I live! " And his gun with which he had been shooting the game for many years he dashed to pieces against a rock.

I saw it myself, for the priest and I were in the Karwässer, assisting in the search for the child.

This Waldlilie is very gentle and as white as snow, and her eyes are like those of the deer.

Winter, 1830.

The reports about our master's son do not cease. If only the half were true which is told concerning him, he would be, indeed, a wild fellow. No sensible human being would act thus.

I will make a note of it and write to his father soon. Hermann should visit our forest and see how poor people live.

Such a journey into the mountains is sometimes very beneficial.

The Winter Season.

Lazarus Schwarzhütter is often seen casting loving glances at Grassteiger's little daughter, and the girl is growing fond of the lad; so they coquette with one another although the priest has forbidden the young people to do this. Certainly it is his privilege to preach, but they continue in their gazing all the same and think they have the right, a right which Lazarus declares they will never relinquish.

"Very good," says the priest, "they shall be united even though they afterward regret it."

January 14, 1831.

Today I have received news of the death of my relative, Aunt Lies. She has made me her heir. Old acquaintances, who have not troubled themselves about me for twenty years, congratulate me upon my inheritance. But I have heard no further particulars. How much can the old lady have had? I know she was rich, but she wasted everything in games of chance.

And should it be only one groschen, or, indeed, nothing at all — by my soul, I am pleased that she thought of me. She always meant well by me. Now my last relative is dead.

Spring, 1831.

I am already beginning to design houses which are to be built from the proceeds of my inheritance. In Winkelsteg I shall erect a large, beautiful mansion, larger than the parsonage. I have the plans all completed. But as long as I remain schoolmaster, I have no desire to live in it myself. Sometime I shall give a little room in this house to the invalid Reutmann from Karwässerschlag; and I shall ask the old, childless Frau Brunnhütter, and the sick Aga from the Karwässer, and Markus Jäger, who is blind, and Joseph Ehrenwald, who has been injured by a falling tree. And I shall welcome many others, until, by degrees, the great house is filled. There are a number of wretched creatures wandering about in the Winkel woods.

I shall place a doctor and medicine at the disposal of these people, that is, if the money goes far enough. Then I will invite in jesters and musicians who understand providing all kinds of entertainment. An almshouse is dreary enough, without sad and lonesome surroundings in addition; the merry world should look in at all the windows and say: " You still belong to me, and I will not let you go! "

I do not need to pay for the land now, as at present I am merely building my castle in the air. The inheritance has not yet arrived. But the report is that my aunt won large sums of money at play.

I shall give the pleasantest room in the new almshouse to old Rüpel. The poor man is really quite deserted. For his rhymes the people pay him now with scarcely a bit of bread. They have forgotten how, in former times, they have been edified by his cheering and uplifting songs on festive occasions, how they have laughed and wept, often saying to one another: " It is as though the Holy Ghost were speaking through him."

To be sure the old man has not much to offer now, and he has really become quite childish. He has bent a piece of wood, across which he has stretched straws for strings, and this is his harp. He rests it against his breast, and his fingers wander over the strings as he murmurs his songs.

His words, like his songs, are becoming more and more unintelligible. They are no longer in keeping with the people or with the circumstances. He sings foolish love songs and children's ditties, as though dreaming of his youth. When in summer the white-bearded man is sitting motionless upon some hill-top, he looks from the distance like a bunch of *Edelweiss*.

The priest has confided something to me which seems to cause him anxiety.

He says it is possible that I may become a rich man, and as such I would probably go forth into the world, to fulfil all the wishes which I have formed and nourished in the wilderness; that no one is entirely unselfish.

This communication has cost me a restless night. I have searched my heart and in truth I have found there *one* desire, which is far away from the Winkel forest. But it could not be fulfilled with money. She is married.

Why should I demur? My wish is fulfilled. *She* is happy.

April 1, 1831.

Today my inheritance has been officially forwarded to me. It consists of three groschen and a letter from my Aunt Lies, which is as follows:

"DEAR ANDREAS:

"I am old, sick, and helpless. You are in the mountains, God only knows where. During my illness I have been thinking over everything. I have undoubtedly done you a wrong and I beg your pardon. This money weighs upon my mind more than all else; it is your christening-money, which you would have sent to your father in heaven. I took it from you, but now I beg you to take it back and to forgive me, for I wish to die in peace. God bless you, and I must say one more word: if you are in the mountains, then do not come away from there. All is vanity. In prosperous days my friends remained true to me; now they leave me to die in poverty.

"Many thousand kisses for you, my dear, my only kinsman. When God takes me to Himself in heaven, I will greet your parents for you.

"Until death
"Your loving aunt
"ELISE."

A DYING SON OF THE FOREST

Winter, 1831.

Who in former times would have thought that the hermit from the Felsenthal could have become what he now is? The inactivity after such a stirring life, the isolation from people might well have made him insane.

It has come about in a wonderful way. Only the great cares and petty troubles of a forest priest, only the monotonous, yet many-sided and significant life of a forest parish in its infancy and loneliness could have saved him.

A terrible epidemic is raging in the Winkel woods; our graveyard is becoming too small and we are unable to secure the services of the grave-diggers; even the strongest men are ill.

The priest is away from home night and day, sitting with the sick people in the most distant huts, caring for their bodies as well as for their souls, even though the Baron has advised him not to trouble himself with worldly cares.

At last, as he is sleeping one night in his own warm bed, there comes a sudden knock on the window.

"It's too bad, sir!" calls a voice from the darkness without. "There's trouble over in the Lautergräben. We don't know what to do. Will you help us? My brother Bartelmei is dying."

"Who is it out there?" asks the priest.

"I am Anna Maria Holzer; Bartelmei is going to leave us."

"I am coming," says the priest. "But wake up the schoolmaster that he may make ready the lanterns and the sacrament. He need not toll the bells, for every one is asleep."

However, the woman begs me to ring the bells, so that others may pray for the dying man. And as the priest now comes out and walks away among the houses, preceded by the woman with her lantern and little bell, men, heavy with sleep, are kneeling before their doors, praying.

It is a stormy winter night; the wind sweeps across the cliffs and whistles through the bare, frozen branches of the trees. A fine snow whirls about us, blocking the path and drifting into all the folds of our clothing.

The woman hastens on ahead, and the reflection from the red glass of the lantern dances up and down upon the snowy ground, while the little bell which she carries rings incessantly, although the tones are lost in the storm, and the people in the village have gone to their rest once more. I, too, after watching the pair for awhile, return to my room.

But I will write down that which happened to the priest on this night; for the story which was told him was not under the seal of the confessional.

As our Father Paul stands by the bed of the sick man, the latter says: "Do you remember, Father, how you came into the Karwässer? Do you remember? It's long ago; we both have seen much since then and, by my faith, we have both grown gray!"

The priest warns the old charcoal-burner not to excite himself by exhausting conversation.

"And can you remember what I said to you then: that I too had my troubles and that sometime a priest might do me a great service? That time has now come. I am lying on my deathbed. I have already arranged with Ehrenwald-Franz to make a coffin for me. My body will be properly cared for;—but my soul, Father,—God pardon me!—that is as black as the devil."

The priest seeks to soothe and comfort the man.

"Why all that?" asks Bartelmei, "I'm not at all worried or afraid. I'm sure that everything will come out all right. Why are you bothering to put on your white robe? No, there is no need of that, let us finish up the affair as quickly as possible. When a man is nearing his end, he doesn't want to do anything unnecessary. I beg you to sit down, Father. I'll say at once, I am not much on matters of faith; to tell the truth, I believe in nothing any longer. God Himself is to blame for my having been brought so low. He denied me something which, by my soul, in His almighty power He might have granted me so easily! I can talk about it now. When Marian Sepp was dying—and she was to have been mine, so soon—I said to her at her deathbed, 'Marian,' I said, 'if you must die now, my love, and I have to remain alone all my days, then God in heaven is doing a most cruel thing. But I should like to know, Marian,—and I should like to know it before my death—what the other world really is which everybody says has no end, and in which the soul of man lives on forever. Nothing definite can be learned about it, and even though we may believe what other people say, it is not at all sure that they know anything about it either. And now, Marian,' said I, 'if you have to leave us and if you enter eternity as soon as we have buried you, then do me the favor and, if you can, come back to me sometime, if only for a few moments, and tell me about it, that I may know what to believe.' Marian promised, and if she could have come I know she would have done so. After she died, I could not sleep for many nights and I was always — always thinking, now, now the door will open and Marian will appear and say: 'Yes, Bartelmei, you may indeed believe it, it is all right, there is an eternity over yonder and you have an immortal soul!'

"What do you think? did she come? She did *not* come, she was dead and gone. And since then — I cannot help it — I believe in nothing any more."

He is silent and listens to the roaring of the winter storm. For a while the priest gazes into the flickering flames and finally says:

"Time and eternity, my dear Bartelmei, are not divided by a wall, which we may cross at will. The entrance into eternity is death; in death we lay aside all that is temporal, for eternity is so long, that nothing temporal can exist there. Therefore your presumptuous request to the dying girl was forgotten and all memory of this earthly life extinguished. Freed from the dust of this earth she went to God."

"Never mind, Father," interrupts the sick man, "it doesn't trouble me any more. Be that as it may, it will all be right. But there is another difficulty; I'm not at peace with myself. I've not been what I should have been; however, I should like to arrange my affairs properly, just as other people do. I've not much more time, that I well know, and so I had you dragged out of your warm bed, and now, Father, I earnestly beg you to intercede for me. Well — it has been a secret, but I will out with it: I have been a poacher; I have stolen many a deer from the owner of the forest."

Here the charcoal-burner stops.

"Anything else?" asks the priest.

" What! Isn't that enough!" cries the old man; " truly, Father, I know of nothing else. I was going to ask you to beg the Baron's forgiveness. I should have done it myself, long ago, but I always kept thinking I would wait a little while; I might perhaps need something more from the forest, and to ask pardon twice would be unpleasant. Better wait and do it all at once. But I have waited much too long; I can never do it now. The Baron is, who knows, how far away. But no matter, you will be so kind and make everything all right, telling him in Christian language that I have indeed repented, but not until too late to alter matters.

" Now, this is the way it was: to be sure the charcoal business yields a bit of bread, but when on a feast day a man wants a bite of meat with it, then he cannot but go straight to the woods with his gun. He can't help it, no matter how long he may resist the temptation; 'tis a great pity, but he can't help it. If the game wardens had ever arrested me, this conversation would not have been necessary and I should not be obliged to ask such a favor of you. Ah! but I'm tired now. I feel death approaching."

They revive him with cold water. The priest takes his hand and promises him, in a few kind words, to obtain pardon from the Baron. He then pronounces absolution to the sick man.

" Thank you, thank you very much," says Bartelmei with a weak voice. " Well, this is settled, and — Father, now, by my soul, I should be glad myself, if it were true, this about eternity, and if, after my restless life and bitter death, I might quietly slip into heaven. 'Twould be such a pleasant thing to do!"

Thus does the deep need and the longing for faith and hope express itself in the poor, sick man. Our priest now asks him if he wishes to receive the holy sacrament.

" It isn't necessary," is the answer.

" But you must, brother, you must," says Anna Maria; " a priest who returns home without having administered the sacrament will be followed by devils to the very church door!"

"You foolish woman, you!" cries Bartelmei; "now you are telling children's fables fit to make the priest laugh at you. After all, it's the same to me and, to keep the priest from being molested on his way home, I would gladly swallow the wafer, but I don't care about it, and then, I have often been told, it is a terrible sin to partake of the sacrament unworthily."

Hereupon the priest fervently presses the hand of the sick man, saying: "You must not be proud in your old age, Bartelmei; but this I say to you, you have the right idea. You are honest and upright, you believe in God and in the immortality of the soul, whether you acknowledge it to yourself or not. Your heart is pure and the happiness of heaven shall be yours!"

Then the old man is said to have raised himself, stretched out his hands, and with moist eyes he smiled, saying: "At last I have heard the right words. Will you be so good as to administer the sacrament to me? Then the Grizzly Terror may come — see there, see there! What is that? Marian!" suddenly cries Bartelmei. He turns his eyes toward the light, and whispers: "Yes, girl, why are you wandering about here in the dark night? Marian! Do you bring me the message? — the message?"

He raises himself still higher, always repeating the word: "Message!" until he finally sinks back upon his bed and falls asleep.

After a while he opens his eyes, and with a weak voice says: "Was I childish, sister? I had such a strange dream! My head is so hot! I know that I can't last long; I feel such a burning in my heart.— I must say, God bless you, all of you. Take care of your children, sister, and see that they do not take to poaching.— I've already paid Ehrenwald for the coffin.—And be sure and wash me thoroughly; as coal-black Russ-Bartelmei I should not like to enter heaven."

When the morning blow shimmered through the little window, the man was dead. They dressed him in his Sunday garments, and laid him in the coffin. His sister's children sprinkled him with water from the woods.

Yesterday we buried him.

Lent, 1832.

The church authorities are beginning to trouble us again. Our priest is not sufficiently orthodox; they wish to close his church.

The church which we have built in the sweat of our brows!

It is quiet enough there now; Father Paul conducts the service in the sick-rooms and in the cemetery. The people are coming to the parish church in coffins. The epidemic is now called "The Death." The school has been closed for months.

The report is going about that the priest is to blame for the sickness, on account of having forbidden the brandy; brandy, they say, is the surest means of preventing contagion.

March 22, 1832.

Our priest died today.

Three Days Later.

He contracted his last illness while ministering to the sick. He had pronounced the betrothal blessing of Lazarus Schwarzhütter and Juliana Grassteiger. A slight indisposition called him from the festivities to his room which he never left again. And like a good, faithful shepherd, he taught us in his last hours the most important of all things — how to die. Like a smiling child he fell asleep. Not one of us who saw it has any further fear of death; and we have vowed to ourselves strictly to fulfil our duty in accordance with his example.

From this time on, Andreas, you are not growing younger. Younger? Who has taught you to prate thus foolishly? Count the silver threads in your hair, count them if you can, you old man!

I feel as though the priest had taken me with him.

May, 1832.

Strange reports are again being circulated about our young master. And this time they are officially confirmed. Hermann has taken possession of his father's estates and thus he has come to be our chief.

He is said to be an invalid.

Yesterday Berthold came to see me. Since the time that he found his lost child with the creatures of the forest he poaches no longer, but works industriously at wood-cutting, while his children earn their bread by picking wild berries.

He brought me a bundle of dried leaves, which grow only over in the defile and possess a wonderful healing power, which has restored Aga's health, who had been an invalid for so many years. Lili had gathered and dried the leaves, and then it occurred to the family to send them to the young Herr von Schrankenheim; there was no doubt that, by using the herbs, he would regain his health. He requested me to forward the medicine, which I gladly agreed to do.

ALPINE GLOW

Corpus Christi, 1832.

And now the old forest singer also is silent. His life and death have been like a beautiful wild-rose in the wilderness.

It has given me much pleasure to write out his strange sayings, and I will here record his end.

Up on the Breitsteinalm Kropfjodel owns a herdsman's hut. And here during the summer live two of his irrepressible sons, who look after the cattle and, to pass away the time, perpetrate all sorts of mischief. Rüpel had been staying with the lads of late, and had entertained them greatly with his songs and his straw harp. The old man had now become quite childish and, with his failing sight, was pitiable indeed.

This was just what amused the lads, who made him the butt of all their jests; and he did not dislike it, being glad to make himself serviceable in any way and realizing that he was no longer of use to other people.

In the evening he always returned to the hut, where he was given food and allowed to sleep in the haymow.

Early one morning old Rüpel was sitting before the door upon a stone, damp with dew, playing upon his straw harp, at the same time turning his weary eyes up toward the morning glow on the rocks. Suddenly a wild yell resounded in his ears. He started in terror, and saw the two boys standing beside him, laughing. The old man looked at them with a good-natured smile.

"Have you been threshing straw, Rüpel?" Veit asks, pointing to the strange harp-strings.

"And so early!" adds Klaus.

The old man turns, and holding his hand to his lips, he whispers confidentially: "Don't you know the proverb old? The morning's mouth is filled with gold."

"You don't mean it!" Klaus replies mockingly. "Then its teeth will not last long!" The shepherd-lads shout with laughter at this foolish joke.

"Up there is gold, up there!" And the old man tremblingly points to the glowing cliffs.

"Yes, Rüpel, you are right!" Veit answers seriously; "that is really gold; why don't you climb up and scrape it off?"

Rüpel looks at them in surprise.

"You might get a whole basketful, and perhaps more!" Klaus urges; "then you would be able to build yourself a golden castle, and buy a golden table, and golden wine, a golden harp, and a golden wife!"

"A golden harp!" murmurs Rüpel, his eyes glistening. He passes his hand over his brow. He himself had first spoken of the golden morning, but only in the figurative sense of the proverb — and now, could it really be true?

"And this straw you can put in the manger for Grassteiger's donkey!" cries impudent Veit.

This contempt for his harp causes a shadow to fall upon the countenance of the old man.

"My harp, leave that alone, I say; do not make fun of it, I pray."

These words only provoked the youthful tormentors to further mischief. "I'll show you how to play upon this harp!" Veit answered, passing his hand over the strings, and breaking them in pieces with a rattling noise. The lads then darted away.

The old man sat awhile motionless. He stared at the broken harp, wiped his eyes with both hands, and endeavored to arouse himself from his dream; he could not believe that it was true. His only possession, his all, they had ruined — his harp.

Not until the sun was shining brightly on the rocks above did he rise. He hung the bent branch with the broken straw over his shoulder, gazed up at the cliffs, all radiant with light, and with faltering steps tottered away toward the precipice, over which the water fell and rippled, gleaming in the sunshine like molten gold.

On the evening of the same day the two shepherd-lads were once more merrily performing their household tasks before the hearth of their hut. They made themselves flour dumplings, which they called *foxes,* because they fried them until they were brown. The herd had been brought in from the pasture and was now safe in the stalls.

The lads were always gay, but particularly so in the evening. When the old harpist was at home, they teased him; if he was not there, they teased each other. On this day Rüpel was still absent, so Klaus sprang like a monkey upon Veit's shoulders, rode upon his neck, his legs hanging down in front, and cried: “ Donkey, who is riding? ” and Veit retorted: “ One donkey rides another.”

Thus the lads amused themselves. Then they ate their dumplings, and with the soot from the pan painted moustaches on their faces. They already aspired to whiskers, and if they only could kiss some young girl, that, according to the proverb, would encourage the growth. Rüpel, they thought, might spin silver strings for the harp from his long beard.

The old man had not yet arrived; could the joking in the morning have offended him? The boys did not like to talk about it. They felt a slight remorse, and so, putting a piece of dumpling into a wooden bowl, they placed it upon Rüpel’s bed in the haymow. In doing this they were again seized with mischief; they barricaded the place with rakes and pitchforks. Now, when the old man returned, he would bump his nose and grumble until at last he came upon the dumpling, which would requite him for all the rest.

On this night the boys slept particularly well. And when they awoke the bright sunbeams were already peeping through the cracks in the wall.

But the old man’s bed was still barricaded with rakes and pitchforks, and the food remained untouched.

Klaus went to the herd in the stable; Veit left the house. And what a glorious day it was! The fields and the woods were fresh, bright and laden with dew, and the morning air had kissed the clouds from the sky. A bird was warbling gaily upon the gable of the hut, and the brook splashed merrily into the trough.

Veit went to the spring. The mountain people like so well to bathe their hands and faces in the cold water, which causes all drowsiness to disappear and the eyes and heart to become bright — bright as the young day. Veit industriously combed his disheveled locks with his fingers, and held both hands under the spout. How comforting is the cool, trickling water, Veit! But in the stream a blood-red thread was spinning itself, which swam and curled, forming little rings in the hollow of his hand. Frightened, the lad withdrew his hands and gazed into the water until more threads and filaments appeared, twined and merged into one another, then separated and scattered.

Veit hastened into the stable: " Klaus, come quick; there is something strange in the water today! "

Klaus ran to the spot, looked, and said in an undertone: " 'Tis blood! "

"A chamois must have fallen into the stream above," replied Veit.

" Strange that Rüpel hasn't come home yet! " Klaus declared, and a little later he added: " It will be easy enough to find out if it is chamois' blood."

Veit was as pale as death. " Klaus," he said, " come up the gorge with me! "

They walked along the little stream; the water had now become clear again.

Deep and deeper the sunbeams penetrated among the silent rocks; higher and higher and hurrying more with every step, the two lads climbed, forcing their way through narrow, gloomy defiles which had been torn asunder by the water in violent storms or hollowed out in the course of time. The lads spoke not a word to one another; they struggled through raspberry-bushes and underbrush, wet with dew; they clambered up the steep precipice; they heard a roaring sound, for they were approaching the spot where the water fell like a golden ribbon over the sunny cliff.

" Here is something; look! " Klaus cried suddenly. They discovered two straws fastened together, and near them the bow made from the pine-bough. On the bushes of the cliff hung a number of torn and broken straws, and below, in the depths of the abyss — in the depths of the abyss — lay the old man.

His head was crushed; in his left hand he rigidly held a branch of an Alpine rose-bush. Over his right hand the water was trickling.

So they found him. Who could tell how he came to his death? Perhaps he was searching up there for the gold of the Alpine glow, with which to make himself a new harp and, while doing this, the poor old man had plunged over the cliff into the defile below. While falling, he had evidently tried to hold himself by the rose-bush, and the branch, with its one brilliant blossom, had remained in his hand. Thus ended the life of the forest singer.

On this Corpus Christi festival we laid him in the ground. There were not many people present. But the birds in the tree-tops sang a melodious slumber song to their brother.

No one in the Winkel forests seemed so poor as this man, and yet no one was so rich. The all-powerful, mysterious, sacred gift of folk-song found its embodiment in this strange being.

Upon Father Paul's grave stands a cross, made from the wood of an ancient pine. Upon the singer's mound I plant a young, living tree.

Autumn, 1834.

The school has been closed for a few weeks. The children are assisting at the harvest; this has ripened late and must now be garnered before the frosts. The rocky heights are already covered with snow.

I should like once more to climb the Graue Zahn that I might look out over the world. I am living a very retired and solitary life. The old people have died; the younger ones I have instructed, but not to be my companions. I am their instructor, but now they desert me, and when, old and gray, I shall sit upon my lonely bench, they will consider my solitude the natural lot of a schoolmaster.

The new priest is a young man, who is better suited to the people; he enters into the sports in the tavern and the bowling-alley. When ordering the new prayer-book from the capital, a short time ago, he also sent for some playing-cards.

Lazarus and his wife Juliana have become owners of the Grassteiger inn; they carry on the business and sell tobacco and all kinds of trifles. They also keep cloths of foreign manufacture, for there are those in the parish who, no longer content with fustian and drilling jackets, wish to have something especially fine to wear; "just for the novelty of it," they say. But I notice this desire soon receives another name.

Summer, 1835.

I am not yet so advanced in years and I am still at work. I teach a few hours, rule the writing-books, point the quills, split a little kindling-wood, and perform a number of small duties in the church; this fills neither my time nor my thoughts.

I spend many sleepless nights, and while lying idly in my bed, I am haunted by maddening memories of former days — *one* face of youthful beauty, *one* with the pallor of death upon it. And then I hear a voice saying: "Thou hast mistaken thy way; thou mightest have lived in splendor and happiness." . . . I spring from my couch, snatch the violin from the wall and scrape the strings that the ghosts may disappear.

And the strings whisper comforting words, telling me to be content, that I have had the happiness to work profitably for the common weal, to strive constantly for the perfecting of my own life; I am surrounded by the glory of nature, and I have learned to know the minds of great men through my books, and I shall still achieve much, according to my strength, and then, content, close my eyes.

WALDLILIE IN THE LAKE

Feast of the Assumption, 1835.

An unexpected event has recently occurred.

A few days ago I received a letter from my former pupil, our present master.

Hermann wrote that he had used the herbs, which I had sent him from the wood-cutter, and since then the condition of his health was somewhat improved. This had suggested to him the advisability of visiting the mountains, with which he was not yet acquainted and of spending a few days here in the mild early autumn. His intention would be to travel alone; for people, especially those of the city, were unspeakably repugnant to him,—that being probably a peculiarity of his nervous state, which he was unable to overcome. Weary of the world, he wished to seek restoration in the wilderness and in the primeval freshness of the Alps. He still remembered me, his former tutor, as well as my services in the Winkel forests, and he begged me to be his guide in the mountains and on a certain day to meet him in the village of Grabenegg.

On the day mentioned I arrived at the appointed place and there awaited the master of the forest, who also came as agreed, having driven over in a hired carriage. I then proceeded with him toward our mountains. Hermann's appearance thoroughly alarmed me; I should not have recognized him, but he, on the contrary, at the first glance addressed me as Andreas. His greeting was polite, although the poor man showed plainly that he was surfeited with life.

The road extended as far as the rocky mountain-pass. Here Herr von Schrankenheim sent back the carriage and over the rough paths, trodden only by deer, we entered the wilderness, where, upon the heights, gleaming glaciers lay. My companion walked ahead, sometimes gloomily and defiantly, sometimes with the eagerness of the hunter on the track of the deer. I did not know where the man wished to go or what he desired; he himself did not know. I was seized with anxiety lest we should not find shelter for the night, but on my communicating my fears to him, he burst into a laugh and strode onward.

Suddenly the idea occurred to me, what if I might be wandering with a madman! Had the Graue Zahn fallen at my feet, my heart could not have beaten more quickly than at this thought.

I begged and warned the Baron, but I was unable to stop him; he would pause only for a moment at the edge of the precipices, cast one glance into the abyss below and then hasten forward. His limbs trembled and great drops stood upon his forehead, as at last in the gathering twilight he fell exhausted beside a mountain spring.

In that hour I promised God everything, everything if He would but lead us to a shelter. He heard my prayer. Not far from the spring, between the two walls of the defile, I discovered a hut, such as are erected by the chamois-hunters.

And under this roof, in the midst of the terrors of the wilderness, I made a fire and from moss and branches prepared a bed for the Baron.

We ate the food which we had brought with us and drank the water from the spring. When the meal was over, my companion leaned back against the mossy wall murmuring: "How refreshing! How refreshing!"

And after a while he looked at me and said: "Friend, I thank you for being with me. I am ill. But here I shall be healed. This is the water which the wounded stag drinks, is it not? I have led a wild life — very wild! I have found that man is not a toy! And now at last I have fortunately escaped the doctors. I have no desire to lie in a metallic coffin; it savors of pomp, of gold and silk, of feigned tears — *pfui!*"

To my relief he soon fell asleep. I watched the whole night, endeavoring to devise a means of taking the poor, sick man to some human habitation. We were in a remote place and, to reach Winkelsteg, we should be obliged to cross the mountains.

The next morning, after I had made a new fire and the sun was already shining through the chinks in the wall, the man awoke, and looking about him in astonishment, said: "Good-morning, Andreas!"

He then began to prepare for the journey.

"I wish to climb the high mountain which they call the Graue Zahn," he said; "I should like once to look down upon this world from a high place. Can you not accompany me and arrange to take one or two men with us? Have no anxiety on my account. Yesterday was a bad day. I wandered, restless and forlorn and without aim, through the wilderness, endeavoring to escape from myself as I had escaped from men in the world without. I was overcome with all the pain of my misery. But this air is healing me — oh, this pure, blessed air!"

On leaving the hut, we were obliged to shade our eyes with our hands; the light was so dazzling. The branches of the pines were a golden red and in the shadow of the thicket trembled dew-drops, which already reflected the sunlight through the trees. The birds were holding a jubilee and squirrels were frisking about, looking for their mates and their breakfast. The dry leaves of a young beech were gently swaying in the mild morning air.

Hermann smiled and we proceeded on our way. A gleam, as of water, shone between the tree trunks and a cool breeze fanned our cheeks. Suddenly a flood of light filled the forest and each tree stretched out its arms — silently and reverently pointing to a wonderful picture.

A peaceful lake lies at our feet, stretching far into the distance, blue, green, black — who can tell the color? On the banks of the eastern side, the dark mountain forest, softly veiled in bright sunbeams, slopes upward from the gray, pebbly beach. On the opposite shore towers a massive wall of rock, behind which are piled crag upon crag, precipice upon precipice up to the highest peaks and cones and spires which pierce the blue sky above. The mountains, ever varying in form, stretch away in a great half circle, glorious beyond all description. Here below are grassy slopes dotted with tufts of juniper-bushes, green and velvety. In the distance are waterfalls, milk-white and slender as a thread, their roaring heard by no human ear, for the sound is lost in space; beyond on the mountain sides are rocky wastes and dry river-beds, each little stone clearly outlined in the crystalline air; farther on deep gorges, their dark recesses filled with snow; and above all tower the massive weather-beaten rocks, silent and sinister in their eternal repose.

An eagle soars into the blue ether: now like a black spot, now like a silvery leaf the bird circles about the rocky peaks. And on the distant heights, shining glaciers softly lean against the red gleaming sides of precipices, on which the chisel of Time is constantly cutting, engraving thereon a never-ending history and the inflexible laws of nature.

I see it still, see everything clear and distinct before my eyes,—the lake below, the Graue Zahn above.

I had already beheld similar scenes; nevertheless the glory of this one quite overwhelmed me. But the Baron stood there like a statue. He gazed, absorbed in the endless picture; his trembling lips inhaled the air of the lake.

We then climbed down to the shady banks, where the water was splashing over the worn stones.

"This lake so smooth today, must be very wild at times," my companion remarked. "Just see how far up the precipice the stones have been washed smooth by the waves."

By these words I perceived that Hermann had an intelligent eye for nature. "Yes, indeed, this lake can become wild enough, although now it looks so mild and peaceful."

A remarkable incident then suddenly occurred. Below, where the bushes dipped into the lake, a human head emerged. The water dripped from the long, brown curls and blooming face. The neck and throat were somewhat sunburnt, but the softly molded, undulating shoulders were like snow-white marble. A young, beautiful woman, a mermaid! God knows, it was enough to make one a poet!

The Baron, being shorter-sighted than I, approached the apparition, and in the same moment the figure sank out of sight and the alders swayed over the water as before.

Hermann gazed at me. I gazed into the lake, the surface of which moved in soft rings and bubbles and dark lines, here smooth as a mirror, yonder trembling and rippling. But the head of the maiden did not appear again. Several minutes elapsed while with a beating heart I looked for the bather, for who knew if she were able to swim, and the thought suddenly flashed through my mind: What if the girl out of modesty had sought a grave for herself beneath the waves!

After much anxiety and alarm I at last drew the unconscious child from the water. With our small experience, we finally restored her to life — to her life of seventeen years. And thereupon the shy creature, scarcely revived and having been clothed by our assistance, sprang to her feet and darted away through the forest, her fright giving her strength.

The Baron, holding his head with both hands, cried: "Andreas! my malady is returning; I have visions, I have seen a fairy!"

"That is no fairy," I answered; "it is the daughter of the wood-cutter who sent you the herbs."

It was Waldlilie.

A Few Days Later.

Today the Baron rode away from Winkelsteg on Grassteiger's white horse.

Nothing came of the proposed ascent of the Zahn. After Waldlilie had escaped from us there by the lake, Hermann said to me: "My fate is sealed; I shall not climb the mountain. Take me to your Winkelsteg, Andreas."

And here he remained three days, inspecting our arrangements and drinking a great deal of our water.

Our forester died some time ago, so Berthold has now taken his place and lives with his family in the Winkelwarden's house. In a few days the marriage ceremony of Berthold and Aga will be quietly celebrated in the church. The Baron has arranged it. This has made me very happy. Hermann has a thoroughly sound heart; a sick man could

AN ILL-MATCHED COUPLE

From the Painting by Wilhelm Leibl

PERMISSION PHOTOGRAPHISCHE UNION, MUNICH

not act so promptly and with so much assurance. But he is a peculiar man notwithstanding. Before he left, he came to me in the schoolhouse and, drawing me down beside him on a bench, said: ‘‘ Schoolmaster! She prized her maidenhood more than her life; could I have believed that such a woman existed on earth? The shameless coquettes who dwell in palaces, how recklessly have they played with me! You, Erdmann, have had the experience of looking up at the world from a lower station in life, have become acquainted with it and had your fill. I have viewed it from above, which is quite a different side, full of splendor and beauty, but as contemptible as the other. Nothing extraordinary has befallen me, Erdmann, I have merely lived and have been unhappy. I, too, belong to this forest — Andreas — I, too, belong here! But I must now return to my old father. . . . God forbid that I should take her with me! Happily she does not know the world. I leave her in your care, Schoolmaster. Should she feel the want of learning, then teach her; if not, then cherish and guard her as a wild-lily of the woods. And keep my secret, Schoolmaster. When I have recovered, I will come again.’’

Having shown by these significant words that a great change had taken place in his feelings, he rode away toward Holdenschlag on Grassteiger’s horse, a workman from this place accompanying him.

On the day of his departure, three search-warrants arrived, saying that the young Herr von Schrankenheim, who had long been suffering from melancholia, had strayed away and disappeared. He had probably gone to the mountains, for he had dressed himself like a mountain traveler. And then the clothing, as well as every detail concerning my dear pupil Hermann, was as minutely described as that of an escaped convict. It is all right, he will return. He has merely visited his forest possessions. Why should he travel in the exact manner of the rich?

Thank God, he is the master of Winkelsteg!

And how relieved I am, for now Berthold and his family are saved. They have weighed so heavily upon my conscience.

The obscure words of the Baron, which he said to me at parting, are partially explained. Waldlilie now comes to school and we practice reading, writing, and everything connected therewith as far as I understand these subjects myself. She is very industrious and apt, can think independently and is becoming lovelier every day.

Her name is more and more suited to her, for there is something lily-like about the girl; she is so slender, white, and gentle, and yet there are traces of the sun's kiss upon her round cheeks and fresh lips. There is also something still clinging to her which she caught from the deer on that long winter night, her graceful alertness and the eyes.

Oh, Andreas! Dost thou look at all thy pupils so closely?

But then she pleases every one.

She is beloved by the poor, for she knows how to help them. She has comforted many a sad heart by her warm friendly words; she has cheered many a discouraged one by her sweet singing. And it is beautiful how all the children in Winkelsteg know Waldlilie and cling to her. If the priest were only living, what great pleasure he would take in such a nature!

And the girl is courageous; regardless of wild animals and vicious people, she climbs the mountains to gather fruit and plants. But then it is written on her forehead: "All evil is powerless before thee!"

She recently brought me a blue gentian with bright red stripes, such as grow only over in the glen.

"Have you been by the lake again, Lili?" I asked. Turning as red as the stripes on the flower, she hastened away.

Perhaps she never knew that I was one of the men who had surprised her at her bath in the lake, and had so alarmed her that she would have gone to her destruction had not one of us brought her to dry land.

The occurrence must be like a dream to her; let it never be mentioned again.

But of the fine young master of the forest, who has rescued her family from distress and poverty, she speaks with pleasure and enthusiasm.

Summer, 1837.

It is fulfilled at last. The signs of it have been in the air since one day in the spring, when Hermann, as though newly awakened to powerful manhood, arrived again in Winkelsteg and at once asked me concerning Waldlilie.

He no longer takes pleasure in the noisy, rioting circle called by many the *world*, although the term is entirely misapplied. Hermann has fortunately passed the dangerous crisis. He has now entered mature life, where one longs for the glories of nature and the inner worth of man. Waldlilie has become a wonderfully beautiful young woman, and the pains which I have taken in the development of her intellectual powers have been richly rewarded.

And thus it is fulfilled. Two days ago, on the festival of our Lord's Ascension, the master of the forest and Waldlilie were united in the church.

Over in the glen by the lake, Hermann wished to erect a summer villa, where he and his wife might spend a few weeks every year in the early autumn. But Waldlilie begged him to abandon the idea. She was very fond of that region, but she could not visit the lake.

Winter, 1842.

The years pass by in monotony and solitude; why does no one call me the *Einspanig?*

The young wife afterward changed her mind and the summer villa now stands in the glen by the lake. It is very lively there for a few weeks in the early autumn, and the happy home of our master's family is watched over by the grim mountains.

The forester, now a grandfather, lives with his wife the entire year in this house, and the brothers and sisters of Frau von Schrankenheim may hope for a better lot than was prophesied at their cradle.

The old Herr von Schrankenheim was blessed with two grandchildren before he died in Salzburg in the winter of 1840.

August 1, 1843.

Tonight a little boy was born to Reitbauer in the Karwässer. They brought him here to be baptized, but, as the priest had gone away for a few days and the child was feeble, I administered a private baptism. At the father's request I also stood godfather. The three beloved groschen inherited from my aunt and formerly *my* christening present, shall now go to the little Peter.

The little Reiter-Peter, my godchild, is a sweet lad; but a great misfortune has overtaken him — he has lost his voice by a fall from his bed.

How gladly would I give him mine, for it is no longer of use to me! It has become quite hoarse, and no one listens to it now.

Spring, 1848.

How this is going to affect me I do not know. Perhaps it would be best to take a few weeks' vacation and go away from here.

Outside in the cities the troops are playing havoc; they are breaking into palaces and barricading streets. For that reason she is coming. The general's wife, Hermann's beautiful sister, whom I have so foolishly adored, is coming.

In the house by the lake there is no more room, so she flees with her children to us. Thank God that our Winkelsteg is able to offer her a refuge in these times!

So I will not go away after all. I will remain and be strong and not betray myself. I will look straight into her eyes once before I die.

I feel that God means well by me. The light of her eyes will illumine the dark wooded hills, her breath will soften and consecrate the Alpine air. And even though she goes away again, Winkelsteg, where *she* has dwelt, will be my home.

We have built a beautiful high arch of pine-boughs before the house and decorated the altar in the church with wreaths.

Everything is ready, but no one has thought to have the stones removed from the road. Such women have tenderer feet than those dwelling in the mountains.

For a day and two nights I have been digging the stones out of the road. The people may laugh, but I am only thankful that the moon was shining.

A Few Days Later.

Now they are here. She, the two children, and the servants. I need not have removed the stones, for they drove in carriages. Nearly all Winkelsteg was assembled on the square when they arrived. The priest made an address of welcome; I hid myself in the schoolhouse. But I was thoroughly alarmed, for they alighted directly in front of my window, and I thought they were about to enter.

I saw her very plainly; she has grown younger. She was hardly out of her carriage before she was chasing a butterfly. But it was her youngest daughter. She herself —

By my faith, I should not have recognized her.

Of all her old mirrors with golden frames, not one is so true or has so faithfully retained her glorious image to the present day as my heart has done.

June, 1848.

Yesterday I wandered the whole day among the mountains, and even ascended the Zahn. On the way I asked myself a dozen times: Why are you climbing up here, you old child? Upon the summit I shall find the answer, I thought. I saw the kingdom of the Alps. I gazed into the blue depths of the glen below where stands the manor-house by the black sheet of water. I strained my eyes toward the south, my eyes already weak, but — it was all in vain. Often though as I have climbed up there, I have never, never yet beheld the sea.

They say it is visible on a clear winter day. Aside from this view, I have nothing more to wish for now; but that one thing I still desire.

In descending I gathered a bunch of Alpine roses, *Edelweiss*, spikenard, arnica, and other flowers and plants and pinned them on the front of my hat, like a love-sick lad. For whom are you taking home the nosegay? For wife and child? Ah, you stupid old man!

But when I am away from her, as I was up there on the Alm, I see that she is still lovely. She will surely accept a bouquet of Alpine roses from me. I will be polite and not force it upon her. Had I but a single drop of old Rüpel's blood in my veins, I would recite a poem appropriate to giving the flowers! These were my thoughts; it is astonishing that I am still so daring!

When I reached the Lauterhöhe, I seated myself under a tree to rest. My meditations were suddenly interrupted by something pulling at my hat; I turned to see what had disturbed me. A brown cow stood there chewing my mountain nosegay.

I started up and was about to strike the animal with my stick, when it occurred to me: Good creature, perhaps my flowers have given you more pleasure than they would afford her, so God bless them to you! She will drink your nourishing milk to make up for their loss.

When, late in the evening, I came down to the village, her windows were brightly lighted.

One of the lady's servants, Jacob, is a jack-at-all-trades. He is exceedingly clever, can play on musical instruments, do tailoring, mend shoes and draw, and finally he has even made a drawing of me. I did not wish to sit for it, but he contrived, until at last, dressed in all my finery, I took my seat on the block of wood yonder. After having made the sketch, he painted it in colors, the result being most remarkable. The red neckerchief was particularly well done.

He has given me the picture, which I look at in the privacy of my room; but the school children must not see it!

I think I will hide it.

I thought I should make the acquaintance of her children, but they speak a foreign tongue which I do not understand. The young gentleman is off with the horses and dogs; the girl would like to spend her time in the meadows with the flowers and beetles, but is forbidden to do this. She is already too old to be allowed childish pleasures.

A day or two ago Hermann — God forgive me for still calling him by this name — came over from the glen to visit his sister. She excused herself on the plea of illness. Jacob told me that the two were not on very friendly terms, for she would recognize no sister-in-law who carried about with her the odor of pitch.

Today the lady gave a dinner to which the priest and Grassteiger were invited. A slice from the roast and a glass of wine were sent to me. Fortunately a beggar was just passing the house, and so the food was not wasted. Thus two beggars have been fed today.

At the dinner, Jacob said, they spoke of me. The lady then related to them how, as a poor student, I had once lived on charity for a time in her father's house, how I had then left the school and returned a vagabond, whereupon her father, out of pity, had sent me to the forest, where he had since supported me.

August, 1848.

They have gone away. Jacob has left here for me a pair of black trousers and one white glove.

July, 1852.

The title-deeds to the land have at last been made out, and now most of the peasants in Winkelsteg are their own masters. They are to be heartily congratulated. But their eyesight seems to have become very dim, for none of them recognize me when I pass them on the road.

This summer I was on the mountain once more. I thought I could almost catch a glimpse of the sea toward the south. But it was only mist.

On this excursion, either from the dazzling light in the distance or the extreme change from heat to cold, I have again brought on the serious trouble with my eyes, which has lasted for many weeks and hindered me in my work.

I think tongue-tied Reiter-Peter should be taught a little music. He must have some way of expressing his feelings. It is hard to realize the suffering caused by keeping everything to one's self.

Peter is clever; he already plays on the zither and the violin. Later I must teach him the organ. The Winkelstegers will need music at the mass in the future as well as now. I shall not always be here.

1855.

Our priest has been replaced by a very young one. The latter says that the curacy has been sadly neglected, but he will now endeavor to improve matters. He has ordered prayers, penances, and religious processions. His sermons are as cutting as lye;—and there are many sore hearts.

Since the arrival of the new priest I am quite superfluous in the school. He fills the hours with teaching religion.

The children are capable of more than they thought—they know the whole catechism by heart.

The emperor and the pope are said to have issued a special edict for the salvation of souls, and in Winkelsteg the devil has never been so much talked about as at present.

August 24, 1856.

Today a public examination took place in the school. An ecclesiastic from the chief town of the district was here. He seemed well satisfied with the religious teaching; as to the rest, he shook his head. On arriving, he greeted me politely; on leaving, he did not even see me.

I often sit a long time up in the burial-ground under the old trees. This grove has been preserved from the great forest, and here the parish is being gathered, thus making another link in the chain of human history. I may sit here as long as I please, no one will call me. Would that the dead did not sleep so soundly!

Winter, 1857.

A diary is a faithful friend. No matter what one confides to it, it forgets nothing and discloses nothing. When I look through these records, I cannot realize that I have experienced and written all this. It is a strange history.

And who have I been! From the old man that I felt myself to be when I entered these forests, I became a younger one, from a young man I have grown to be a poor old creature before whose half-blind eyes the notes dance up and down on the page, when I play the organ for mass in the church. The people have pushed me aside.

Dear me, others fare no better, and I desire nothing; I have done my part and am content.

1864.

For fifty years I have not been out of these forests.

These forest-folk come into existence, live and die and not once in their lives do they climb the mountain, from where one can behold the glorious picture and, on clear winter days, the sea.

The Sea! How my heart swells at the thought! Yonder moves a boat, and in it stands a yonth beckoning—

Heinrich! What is it?

How foolish of me to have spent my whole life in the Winkel, when I should have been a sailor!

Christmas Eve, 1864.

The stretch of the road is short, but the young people are sliding upon their sleds and boards over the frozen snow, from the Winkel-warden's house down to the churchyard wall. And how eager they are, as with glowing eyes and cheeks they shout at their sport!—I am waiting for Reiter-Peter; he is coming with his violin to try the new Christmas song with me. In the meantime I am looking at the happy children and writing.

The little ones wear fur caps, and they stumble and puff before they reach the top with their sleds—and they are down in ten seconds. Much exertion and short pleasures! I only hope none of them will bump their heads against the wall! Would that I might glide down to it on my sled — and never return!

Peter is coming. "Sleep sweetly, sleep in holy peace!" The song is so lovely, and tomorrow —

THE LAST PAGE

. . . and tomorrow . . .

With these words the story closes.

I had read two long rainy days. I had read the experiences of a strange life, covering a period from the last century up to the preceding Christmas festival.

. . . and tomorrow . . .

My head was heavy and hot. I gazed toward the door, fully expecting the man would enter and go on with his writing and tell us what happened the next morning, as well as what occurred afterward. For this is no ending and no leave-taking; it is a hopeful look into the future, a long breath of relief, a morning star.

I felt almost convinced that the schoolmaster was still living. He was surely wandering somewhere in unknown parts, this poor man with his great, nameless longing, such as all feel more or less, the longing for the whole, the infinite, the true — incomprehensible though it be — wherein our striving, weary souls hope to find repose and deliverance.

A feeling possessed me that I must hasten forth and seek everywhere for the good, childlike, old man. And what a terrible struggle and effort he had made! A vain endeavor after the pursuits of society, a painful crushing of his rising youthful passion, a despairing plunge into the entanglements of life, an adventurous journey over the world, a fearful awakening and disappointment, a flight into the barren wilderness, a quiet continuous toiling in resignation and sacrifice, a great success, a deep contentment. Old age approaches, a young generation and new conditions no longer offer opportunity for work; a sad withdrawal into himself, desertion and loneliness, vague doubts and dreams, a quiet resignation and old age. The longing and imagination of his youth still remain. And he has received a great reward, a compensation which reconciles us to his fate, and which the world can never give, for it only comes to one after the true fulfilment of life; it is the peace of the soul.

I carefully locked the sheets of paper in the drawer and went down toward the tavern.

On this same evening the host was very loquacious, but I was silent and soon retired to my schoolhouse to rest.

How changed was my view of everything here from that of two days before. I felt almost at home in this Alpine village where I, seemingly, had grown old in reading the schoolmaster's story.

And the man who had founded and developed the parish with his life's blood was now to be cast aside and forgotten?

The next morning was so dazzling that the light penetrated my closed eyelids. On opening the window I saw that it was a bright, clear winter day.

I sprang to my feet. It had snowed, and the white covering lay over the whole valley and upon all the roofs and trees.

I was soon ready for my Alpine climb.

"Today, *mein Herr,*" said the hostess, "today it will indeed be fine on the mountain, if you do not lose your way in the snow. He who has patience may hope for everything in this world, even beautiful weather in Winkelsteg. But you must take some one with you." Then turning to her husband she said: "Do you not think that Reiter-Peter would like to earn a nice little fee for acting as guide?"

"Reiter-Peter," I said, "yes he will suit me; for I do not care to talk on the way."

"Ah, you already know that Peter cannot talk; yes, he is quiet enough, when he hasn't his fiddle with him."

So, provided with the necessary equipment, I climbed the mountain with the schoolmaster's godchild.

The snow was soft and glistened in the morning sunlight. Soon the prostrate plants and flowers were again standing erect, and the birds sang and hopped from branch to branch, shaking the flakes from the trees. The grass showed fresh and green through the rose-tinted whiteness of the ground, and the mountains stood out in bold relief against the sky. Summer and winter were blended in a most wonderful manner.

We walked by the burial-ground. Peter removed his hat, carrying it in his hand until we had passed the sacred spot.

A little later we came out upon a mountain ridge.

From this elevation quite an extensive new region opened toward the north; valleys and wooded hills were clearly outlined before me; to the left rose the cliffs, forming a rough, broken wall far above the forest. In this direction I fancied were the regions of the Lautergräben, the Karwässer, the Wolfsgrube and the Felsenthal. The path led down toward the valley; but we turned to the left and climbed through forests of fir-trees and underbrush, higher and higher until we reached the clearing, which extended upward toward the towering masses of rock.

The snow here was somewhat harder and more crusty, but it did not especially interfere with our walking. A few huts stood on this spot, the smoke issuing from their chimneys, while in the stalls the tinkling of cowbells was heard. The cattle must eat hay today, but after the snow has gone there will be warm, pleasant weather again. I should like to know from which of these windows the master-workman Paul was found dangling!

We proceeded on our way; I soon noticed that my companion was not familiar with the path.

Approaching the rocks, we climbed through the defile, as I remembered the schoolmaster had done, and at last we reached the summit.

The picture was beyond comparison. The schoolmaster has described it.

We walked along the ridge, rested a little to refresh ourselves with bread and meat and bind on our climbing-irons, then, slowly crossing the glacier, we advanced toward the cone.

The air was remarkably clear, still, and frosty; and so invigorating that I felt like shouting for the very joy of living. The nearer we approached the summit, the more we hastened our footsteps; Peter, too, became jubilant.

And now we were above, standing on the summit of the Zahn. It seemed to me as if I had already been a number of times on these heights. Surrounding us in an endless circle — as the schoolmaster has said — was the Crown of the Alps.

Even beyond the great forests, in the sunlit south, towered, clear and distinct, the spires and peaks of another mountain range, and farther on, stretched straight before me a shimmering ribbon — the sea!

I felt almost impelled to hasten down from rock to rock and on over hill and valley to seek the schoolmaster and say to him: "Come, look upon the sea!"

Deeply thrilled and absorbed, I gazed a long time. Then we descended a few steps under the jutting rocks where the man had sat and dreamt fifty years ago.

Here the sun was shining warmly and the snow had already melted from some of the stones. Seating ourselves upon one of them, we ate our dinner. Peter played in the snow with his stick, tracing letters; I thought perhaps he was trying to express to me his thoughts and sensations. But he erased the characters and it proved to be only play.

My eyes wandered from one mountain to another, on to the most distant Italian heights; they gazed out over the sunny waters, they drank in the sea, where upon the waves I could catch the gleaming rays of the midday sun. A blue shadow passed before my eyes that had become dazzled by the brilliant light.

All at once a cry rang out near me. The lad had sprung to his feet and was pointing with both hands toward the rough snow-covered ground.

Starting up in alarm, I first noticed where the snow had been displaced by the letters traced in it, and then to my horror I saw — the white covering having been partially removed — the head of a man which was thus exposed to view.

The lad, rigid with terror, stood motionless for a few seconds, then, hastening to the spot, he worked with feverish haste to free the buried form from its snowy shroud. When the whole body was lying stretched before him, he covered his face with his hands and sank sobbing into my arms.

There lay an old man, wrapped in a brown cloak, his features withered and pallid, his deep-set eyes closed, his scanty locks disordered and white as the snow.

My sensations at that hour were beyond description.

"Do you know him?" I asked the lad.

He nodded sorrowfully.

"Is it the schoolmaster?" I cried.

Peter bowed his head in assent.

At last, when we had somewhat regained our composure, we began to examine the dead man more closely. He was carefully wrapped in the cloak, climbing-irons were bound to his feet and near by lay an alpenstock.

In the half-opened leather bag I discovered some dried bread-crumbs and a bit of paper rolled together. Seizing this I opened it, and found a few words, written with a pencil in crooked irregular lines and by a trembling uncertain hand.

The writing, which was legible, was as follows:

"Christmas day. At the setting of the sun I beheld the sea and lost my eyesight" — —

"So he had reached his goal. As a blind man he had written the page, the last page of his story. Then laying himself down on the hard ground, he had awaited death in the freezing winter night.

We built a wall of stones about the dead man and covered it over as best we could. Then we descended to the meadows, taking the shorter path by the way of Miesenbach to Winkelsteg.

The next morning, at an early hour, a number of people began the ascent of the Graue Zahn, I accompanying them. Old Schirmtanner was also with us, and he had much to tell us about the schoolmaster, his story entirely corresponding with the records.

And so we bore the aged Andreas Erdmann, who in the dry cold Alpine air had become almost a mummy, down to the valley of the Winkel to the parish church, which had been built through his efforts; we carried him to the burial-ground which he himself had planned in the shadow of the forest.

The news that the old schoolmaster had been found had already spread through the Winkel woods, and every one came to the funeral and praised the good man. The Winkel landlord wept like a child. "He blessed my poor abandoned father upon his deathbed!" he cried. Schirmtanner was obliged to lead Peter away from the bier.

The forester from the manor-house was there. Close by the grave grew a wood-lily.

The brandy-distiller Schorschl, speaking to a few people who were standing by the entrance to the burial-ground, said that he had had nothing at all against the schoolmaster, but all the same the latter was an obstinate man. And there was one thing to be remembered, said he, if the schoolmaster had only had a little flask of gin with him, he would not have been frozen.

In the evening by the light of torches the good old man was laid in the ground.

SELECTIONS FROM "FOREST HOME" (1877)*

By Peter Rosegger

TRANSLATED BY LAURENCE FOSSLER, A.M.

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FOREWORD

CHILDHOOD days and childhood's home! It is the old, old song of Paradise. There are those who have never forgotten it, though their foreheads are long since furrowed with care and their hair blanched with age, those who have continued in the kingdom and find it more beautiful and pure in memory than ever it was in reality. But children are poets, and poets children. It is a strange part of our being—a trace of the divine—that we are wont to forget past ills, while things beautiful and pleasing, though long since gone by, remain in our memories and, winnowed from the dross of the commonplace, build up in our souls an ideal, an imperishable world.

True, we call those people dreamers in whom the past looms up greater than does the present—aye, even than their plans and hopes for the future. The past is closed, is finished; we view it as a whole. It is a dream; nevertheless I affirm that it is the most real possession; it is unchangeable, it cannot be lost as long as the soul lives.

I call my book, *Waldheimat* ("Forest-Home"), since this name best explains the lives and events which I shall depict. It is indeed a strange soul-life that unfolds itself in the shades of the pine forest, in the dewy meadow valleys or on the silent Alpine pastures. How I reached out for God and His heaven, for all mysterious and unknown things! How I longed for the world, entrance to which was barred, thus forcing me to shape within myself one all of my own. And it grew as I dreamed. Life's activities became my play and the play became my life. A part of my childish heart clung to every occurrence in our neighborhood, to every person whom I knew. And when the years came in which the ardent fires burn, my restlessness became still greater. No doubt others fare as I did—I conformed to custom till all at once I overleaped my bounds. Exultantly I escaped into the World, full of that longing which today draws me back into my Forest-Home.

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*Permission L. Staackmann, Leipzig.

FATHER AND I

It cannot be said that I was brought up badly; rather, I was not brought up at all. Whenever I was well behaved, obedient, mindful of my religious and other duties, my parents praised me. Whenever I was otherwise, I was sharply reprimanded. Praise usually had a good effect upon me, and I had a sensation of adding to my stature. Many children are like plants that grow tall only in sunshine.

Now father was of the opinion that I should grow in *all* directions, and that, to bring about this expansion, strict and severe measures were required.

My mother was all love. And though love needs no apology, she said that children were easily spoiled by harsh treatment; that severity, by constantly adding fuel to the flame, fostered the spirit of opposition always present in children. She admitted that this spirit could be suppressed for a time, so that a rigorous discipline seemed to bear good fruit; but children tyrannized over in their helplessness, would, in their turn, when grown up, tyrannize over their elders. Kindness disarmed opposition, children's hearts were like wax: a piece of wax, when warmed, could be wrapped about one's fingers.

My father was, perhaps, of the same opinion, but he did not know how to give expression to his warmth and love. Weighed down by toil and cares, he seemed stern and unapproachable, for all his warm heart. Not until much later did he let his rich humor sparkle in my presence, when he had a right to assume that I was capable of appreciating it. In the years when I wore out my first dozen pairs of breeches he did not pay much attention to me unless I had been up to some mischief. Then he let stern justice have full sway. And justice usually required that he should take a position directly in front of me and, in a loud and angry voice, tell me of my misdeeds and declare what punishment I had deserved.

During these passionate outbursts I was in the habit of standing straight before my father, as though turned to stone; my arms hanging limply at my sides, my eyes fixed upon his angry face while he upbraided me. I grieved over my faults and had a clear sense of my guilt. But I also remember another feeling I had on these occasions: a strange trembling, a feeling of elation, came sweeping over me as the storm broke furiously. Tears rose to my eyes, they ran down my cheeks, yet I stood motionless gazing at my father and I had an inexplicable feeling of pleasure which rose in proportion to the length and severity of his arraignment.

When, after one of these storms, weeks passed without my conjuring up any new trouble, when father passed me kindly and quietly, as he was going about his work, I began to feel a craving, an impulse, rise and ripen to start something to arouse him anew. It was not to annoy him, for I loved him dearly; it certainly was not maliciousness, but for a reason which at that time I could not understand.

I recall one Christmas eve. Father had bought, the summer before, a little black crucifix at Mariazell.* A leaden figure and the instruments used at the crucifixion, also of lead, were fastened to a little black cross. This sacred object had been safely stowed away till that Christmas eve, when father took it from its hidingplace, the clothes-press, and set it on our little domestic altar. I watched the hour when my parents and the rest of the household were busy in barn, stable, or kitchen, getting ready for the high festival on the morrow. At the risk of my sound limbs I took down the little crucifix and, squatting behind the stove, I began to dismantle it. I felt a strange joy when, with my pocket-knife, I pried loose first, the ladder, then the hammer, and afterwards Peter's cock, and finally the Christ-figure from the cross. The parts seemed much more interesting when separated than when together. Yet now, when I wanted to undo my work of destruction, and did not succeed, there came a feverish, choking sensation in my chest and throat. "If father stops at scolding me it will be a wonder—!" I said to myself, "the black cross is now much prettier than before; over in the Hohenwang Chapel they have one, with nothing on it and yet folks go there to say their prayers. And who wants a crucified Christ on Christmas anyway? 'He should lie in the manger,' the priest says: and that is what I'll make him do!"

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*"St. Mary's Cell," a place of pilgrimage near Rosegger's home.

So I bent the leaden Christ's legs and crossed his arms over the body, laying the figure in my mother's sewing-basket; then I placed the improvised manger high up on the altar, not realizing that this would be the very means to expose this new Descent from the Cross. The cross itself I hid in the straw tick of my parents' bed.

Stern fate soon overtook me. My mother noticed it first. "By whose strange antics has the sewing basket gotten up there among the images of the saints?" she now asked. "Who, I should like to know, was discommoded by the little crucifix on the wall?" my father said simultaneously.

I stood to one side and had the feeling of one who is about to have a draught of strong wine of myrrh. Something admonished me to retire into the background as far as possible.

My father came toward me and asked, in an unnaturally restraining voice I thought, whether I knew what had become of the cross? I stood before him, full length, and looked him in the face. He repeated his question and I pointed toward the bed; tears rose to my eyes, but I do not think that a muscle of my face twitched.

Father looked and found the cross; he was not angry, he was merely shocked at my daring desecration. My longing for the wine of myrrh increased. Father placed the dismantled crucifix upon the table. "I see well enough," he said calmly while reaching for his hat, "I see well enough that the boy must have a sound thrashing. If the Good Lord himself isn't safe from his depredations, it is time to——. Stay here in the room, boy!" he snapped at me angrily; then he went out.

"Run after him and ask him to let it go this time," mother cried out to me, "he's going after some birches."

I seemed riveted to the spot. I saw with horrible distinctness just what was coming, but I was unable to do anything for my protection. In plights such as mine, children are often dominated by a spell which I cannot call stubbornness nor defiance. It is rather an unconscious persistence, a sort of mental rigidity which relaxes once the cause be removed. My mother went about her work; I was alone in the darkening room, before me the mutilated crucifix. I started violently at every sound. The weight of the Black-Forest clock, striking five, rattled heavily in the old clock case that reached from floor to ceiling on the wall yonder. Finally I heard my father stamping the snow from his shoes. When he entered the room with his birch rods I had disappeared.

He went to the kitchen and, in an excited tone, asked what had become of the boy. A search was begun through the house; in the room beds and benches were overturned in an effort to find me. I heard them tramping through an adjoining room, I heard them in the attic. Directions to look through the stables, barns and mangers reached my ears—to go out into the little grove near the house and bring the boy in, instantly. He should remember this

Christmas eve as long as he lived. A couple of our hired men were sent to the neighbors, but my mother shouted after them, that if I had run over there, across the fields and the woods, I must have frozen to death, since my little jacket and hat were hanging on the wall. ''What a peck of trouble children are, anyway!''

They went their way; almost everyone had left the house, and in the gathering twilight I could distinguish nothing but the gray square of the window. I was stowed away in the clock case, and could only peep through the cracks. The little door which served for pulling up the weights was just large enough to let me squeeze myself into the case, where I could stand upright. What terrors I experienced in my hiding place! That things could not turn out well I could plainly foresee and I realized that the excitement, increasing from hour to hour, only made matters worse. I heaped maledictions upon the sewing-basket, I wished I had never seen the crucifix, but I failed to take any blame myself. Hours passed: I stood in my upright coffin, the cone-shaped weights already touching my head. In fact, I had to stoop if the stopping of the clock was not to be the occasion of their finding me. For at last my parents had returned to the room, had lighted a lamp and begun to quarrel over me.

''I do not know where else to look,'' father said, sinking into a chair.

''What if he has got lost in the woods and lies under the snow?'' cried my mother, through her tears.

''What nonsense,'' retorted father, ''not another word!''

''You don't want to hear it, but you yourself have driven him away by your ungovernable temper!''

''I could not have hurt him very badly with this little switch,'' he replied, bringing the birch down to the table with a whiz. ''But now when I get a hold of him I shall break a fence-picket across his back.''

''Do it, do it—like as not it won't hurt him any more,'' mother answered through her tears. ''Do you think that your children were given you just to vent your anger on? The Lord is right in taking them to Himself betimes. One must love children if any good is to come of them."

"Who says I don't love the boy? God knows I do! But I don't like to tell him. I don't like to and I can't. It doesn't hurt him half as much as it does me, I know, when I have to punish him."

"I'll go and look once more," said mother.

"I won't stay here," said father.

"You had better eat your supper now, your soup is getting cold."

"I don't care to eat—I don't know what to do." And with that he knelt down and his lips quivered in silent prayer.

My mother went to the kitchen to gather up some of my warm clothes, in case that a renewed search should find me half-frozen. All was silent again and I, in my dark prison, felt my anguished heart breaking. Suddenly my father began to sob convulsively; his head fell forward on his arms; his whole frame trembled.

I uttered a loud cry. A moment later father and mother had lifted me out of the case. I lay at my father's feet, sobbing and embracing his knees.

"Father, father!" were the only words I could stammer. Down came both his arms to lift me to his breast; my hair was bedewed with his tears. At that moment I knew what I had not known before. I realized what a detestable thing it had been to arouse and annoy my father. But I also realized why I had done so. It was because I had craved to see his face before me, to look into his eye, to hear his voice speaking to me. Even if he, overburdened as he was in those days, could not make merry with me as did others, I longed to see at least his angry eyes and hear his harsh words. The sweet, irresistible power by which I was drawn to my father was none other than the craving to see his face and hear his voice.

WHAT HAPPENED ONE CHRISTMAS EVE

Against the clay-besmeared wall of the tile-stove in our house there stood, year in and year out, a little maple stool. It always looked white and smooth, for, like the rest of the furniture in the room, it was scrubbed every Saturday with a wisp of straw and some fine, white sand from the brook. In spring and summer and early autumn the stool remained standing in its corner, unoccupied and lonely, except that my grandmother drew it out of an evening to kneel on while saying her prayers.

But when late autumn came with its long evenings, in which the hired men whittled pine-knots and the women servants and mother and grandmother spun their flax and wool, or after Advent had come round again and the "spinning evenings" were passed in telling fairy tales or singing hymns, I always sat on the stool against the stove.

Sitting there I listened to song and story, and when the latter became uncanny and I began to be afraid, I pulled the stool up to my mother and clung to her skirts; I could not understand how the others could laugh at me or at the stories. When, at last, it was time to go to bed and mother pulled out my trundle-bed, I did not want to be alone and granny had to lie down with me till the terrifying images had left me and I had fallen asleep.

But the long nights of Advent were always very short in our house. There was a stir soon after two o'clock. Up in the loft the men were heard dressing and going about and in the kitchen the maids were breaking kindling-wood and starting the fire. Then they all went to the threshing floor.

Mother too had risen and lighted the lamp; shortly afterward father got up, and they both dressed, half Sunday, half workday fashion. Then mother spoke a few words to granny, who still lay in bed, and when I, awakened by the commotion, started to talk, she bade me keep quiet and go to sleep again. Then my parents lighted a lantern, put out the light in the room and left the house. I heard the creaking of the outer door and saw the light go flickering past the windows and heard the sound of footsteps through the snow and the shaking of the watchdog's chain. Then, but for the sound of the threshing flail on the barn-floor, all was quiet again, and I fell asleep.

My father and mother had gone to early mass in the parish church, some three hours' walk. I followed them in my dreams; I heard the church-bells and the organ notes and the Advent hymn: "Hail, Mary, brightest morning star!" And I saw the tapers on the high altar and the carved cherubs spreading their golden wings and flying about in the church, and one—the one above the pulpit with the trumpet—flew out over heath and forest and announced to the world that the Saviour was about to come.

When I awoke the sun had long been shining through the windows, and the snow outside gleamed and glittered and mother was again going about the room in her every day apparel, attending to her household duties. Granny's bed, alongside of mine, had already been put in order and granny came from the kitchen and helped me put on my clothes and washed my face with cold water, making me cry and laugh at the same time. When this was done, I knelt with her on my stool and said my morning prayer.

After this I ate my breakfast, and then granny came with a bucket of turnips which we two had to peel. While at this I sat on my stool. But I never could satisfy granny completely with my work; the peelings were always too thick, though in places I had not taken any at all. If I happened to cut my finger and began to cry, granny would say in her cross way, "You are a lot of trouble; really, one ought to roll you in the snow." Then she would bind up my wound most tenderly and carefully.

Thus the days of Advent passed, and granny and I talked more and more frequently about Christmas and the Christ-child which would soon come.

The nearer we approached the festival, the greater the commotion in our house. The men took the cattle from their stalls and put in fresh bedding and straightened cribs and mangers; the herd-boy curried the oxen so that they looked sleek and glossy; the boy who attended to the feeding put more hay with the straw than usual and got a whole stack of it ready in the hay-loft. The young dairy-woman did the same. Threshing had stopped some days before, because one did not wish to desecrate the approaching holidays with the noise.

In the whole house cleaning and scrubbing was carried on; the maids came even into the living-room with their buckets and straw-wisps and brooms. I always looked forward to these house cleanings, because I liked to see everything topsy-turvy, liked to see the images on the shelves above the table and the brown Black-Forest clock with its metal bell and other things—which I usually saw only from a distance—brought down so that I could examine everything more closely. Naturally, I was not allowed to touch those things because, they said, I was as yet too awkward and careless and might easily damage them. But still there were moments in which, busied with their washing and scrubbing, they paid no attention to me.

In one such moment I climbed from my stool, up on the bench and from the bench to the table which had been moved from its usual place and on which lay the Black-Forest clock. I got at the clock, the weights of which hung down over the table, and, peeping through a little door in the case in on the dusty brass wheels, I lightly touched the wings of a little fan-like wheel and finally the wheel itself to see if it would not go. At last I moved a little lever and then there was a dreadful clatter within. Some wheels moved slowly, others more rapidly, and the fan-like wheel flew incredibly fast. I was awfully frightened; I rolled down the table, over bench and stool, down to the wet, mussy floor. Then, in a trice, mother had me by the little jacket and applied the switch. The clatter in the clock would not stop, and mother grabbed me with both hands and pushed me out in the snow and slammed the door. There I stood, utterly undone. From within I heard the crying of my mother, whom I must have offended greatly; I also heard the scrubbing and the laughing of the maids, and I still heard the clatter of the clock.

When I had stood there a while, sobbing, and when no one would come to call me into the house, I went toward a path that had been made in the snow and straight across our yard in the direction of the fields and woods. I did not know where to go and did not care; I merely felt that a great wrong had been done me, and that I could never go back to the house.

I had not yet reached the woods when I heard a shrill whistle behind me. It was granny's whistle.

"Where are you going, you stupid?" she cried, "just you wait! if you are going to run to the woods, old Mosswaberl will get you, just you wait!"

At this I turned instantly toward the house for I was mortally afraid of that old hag.

But I would not go into the house; I remained in the yard where father and two of the men were pulling a pig out of the sty to provide meat for the holidays. I forgot past events in the excitement of the ear-splitting squeals of the animal and of the spurting blood that was caught in a pan by one of the maids. And when father skinned the animal, I stood at his elbow and held the flaps of skin which he peeled off with a big knife from the fat carcass. Later, when he took out the insides and mother poured water into the pan, she said, "Go away there, or you will get splashed."

From these words I gathered that mother's wrath was appeased and that all was well. When I came into the room again to get warm, I found everything back in its old place. The floor and the walls were still damp and the Black-Forest clock hung on the wall and ticked. And it ticked much louder and clearer in the renovated room than before.

Finally the washing and rubbing and polishing ceased. The house became more quiet, almost silent—Christmas eve was here. The noonday meal was not eaten in the living-room as usual but in the kitchen, where the kneading-board served as table. We took our several places about this board, and quietly, though in an expectant holiday mood, ate our simple meal.

The table in the corner was covered with a snow-white cloth, and before it was my stool on which granny knelt and prayed in the evening when the twilight was gathering.

The maids went quietly through the house and got their holiday garb ready and mother put pieces of meat into a large pot, poured some water on and placed it over the hearth fire. I tiptoed about the room and heard nothing but the crackling wood-fire in the kitchen. I gazed at my Sunday trousers, my little jacket and the little black felt hat which hung all ready on a nail in the wall; then I looked out of the window into the gathering darkness. Unless the weather should be stormy, I was to be permitted to accompany our head man to a midnight service at the church. And the weather was calm; it would not even be too cold, father said, because the clouds had settled down on the mountains.

Just before the ''house-blessing''—a time-honored practice of sprinkling holy water on one's belongings and burning incense in house and barns and stables—father and mother had a little quarrel. Mosswaberl had been at the house, had wished us ''Merry Christmas,'' and mother had given her a piece of meat for the festival. Father was put out at this, although he, too, did a great deal of charity, often giving more than our circumstances warranted. But Mosswaberl should not get anything, he thought. She had come into our parts from who knows where; she roamed about in the forest, gathering mosses and roots and making herself a fire in tumble-down charcoal-burners' huts, even sleeping there. To eke out some sort of an existence she came begging at the farmsteads and tried to sell her wares; then, because people would not buy, she wept and cursed. Children whom she looked at stood in great fear of her, many even took sick; she bewitched cows so that their milk turned red.

Whoever did her a kindness was pursued by her for some minutes, while she said, "May God repay you a thousand, thousandfold in this world and in heaven."

But if anyone jeered at her or offended her in any way, she would say, "I pray that the devil may take you down to the depths of hell!"

Mosswaberl often came to our house and liked to sit before it on the green-sward or the fence stile, not minding the barking and the tugging of the chained-up watch dog who always became greatly excited when she came in sight. There she stayed till mother fetched her a bowl of milk, a piece of bread, or both. My mother liked to hear the woman wish her a thousand, thousand blessings; but father did not attach any value to Mosswaberl's utterances, were they blessings or curses.

Years ago when the school-house was being built down in the valley, this woman, with her husband, had come into our parts. She had worked with him about the structure until he was killed while blasting out some rocks. From that time on she could not be induced to work, though staying about; she roamed through the fields and woods, no one caring to have much to do with her; she seemed to have lost her mind.

The magistrate had sent her repeatedly from the parish, yet she had always returned. "She would not have come back," father remarked, "had folks not encouraged her to beg. As it is, she will stay here, and we shall have to take care of her when she is old and sick,—a nice load this we've taken on our backs."

Mother never replied to these remarks but she always gave the usual alms to Mosswaberl; and today, in honor of tomorrow's festival, even a little more.

This, then, was the cause of the little quarrel between my father and mother, which, however, was ended when the men came with the incense bowl and the holy water.

When the ‘‘house-blessing’’ had been attended to, father set a candle on the table, for today pine-knots were to be burned only in the kitchen. We ate our supper in the living room again; the foreman relating marvelous stories in the meantime.

After the evening meal my mother sang a shepherd’s song. Though greatly delighted ordinarily to hear these songs, I now kept thinking of the midnight journey to the church and was impatient to put on my Sunday clothes. There was plenty of time for this later on, they said; still, granny yielded to my importuning at last and dressed me. The stable-boy, too, slowly put on ‘‘his best’’ because, after the midnight service he did not wish to come home, but stay in the village until morning. Toward nine the other servants, both men and maids, were ready and lit a pine-knot from the candle. I clung closely to the foreman; my parents and granny, who stayed at home to look after things, sprinkled me with holy water so that I might not fall nor freeze to death.

Then we set out for the church.

It was very dark, and as we marched the torch which the stable-boy carried cast round, red splotches on the snow, on the fences, and bush and tree. The reddish gleam, broken by the long shadows of our bodies, filled me with dread and fear. I kept close to the foreman, so close that he once remarked, ‘‘Say, boy, you must leave me my coat; what should I do without it?’’

For a time the path was very narrow so that we went single-file. I was very glad that I was not the last, for I imagined that whoever brought up the rear would be exposed to imminent danger from ghosts and goblins.

There was a piercing wind, the glowing sparks from the pine-knot flew afar, and even when they fell upon the hard, snowy crust, they kept on glowing for a while.

Until now we had gone downhill, across bare spots and through bushes and woods; now we came to a brook which I knew very well; it ran through the meadow where we cut our hay in summer. In summer this brook sang merrily, but today one could hear it only murmur and gurgle, because it was frozen over. We also passed a mill where I was greatly frightened because some sparks flew on the roof; but snow lay on it and the sparks died out. After following the brook for a while we left it, and the way led uphill through a dark forest in which the snow lay very light, not forming a hard crust as in the clearings. Finally we came to a broad road where we could go abreast and where now and then we heard some sleigh-bells. The pine-knot in the stable-boy's hands was already burning low; he lit a new one that he had brought along. We could now see other lights on the road, great, red torches flaring toward us as if hovering in the black air; and behind them emerged, little by little, one face, several faces of church-goers, who now joined us. And we saw yet other lights, on mountains and heights, lights that were so far away that we could not tell whether they stood still or moved.

Thus we went on. The snow crunched under our feet and where the wind had carried it away, the black, bare ground was so hard that our shoes rang out on striking it. Our company spoke and laughed much, but this did not seem right to me on holy Christmas eve; my mind kept thinking of the church and wondering what it would be like to have music and high mass in the middle of the night.

After a long march along the road that led past isolated trees and houses, through fields and a patch of forest, I suddenly seemed to hear a faint sound as of a distant bell. But soon I heard it more distinctly. It was the little church bell. The lights which we now saw everywhere, in mountain and valley, all hastened toward the church. The steady little stars of the lanterns, too, came floating toward us, and the road became more and more alive. A bell, larger than the one before, now rang out and kept on ringing till we were almost at the church. So, what Granny had said was true after all: ''At midnight the bells begin to ring, and they ring till the huts in the distant valleys send their last inhabitant to the church.''

The church stands on a hill covered with birch and black pine. About it lies the cemetery, enclosed by a low stone wall. The few houses are in the valley.

When the people had reached the church they extinguished the pine-knots by inverting them in the snow; only one was stuck between two rocks in the churchyard wall and kept burning.

The largest of the three bells now rang from the steeple with slow and rhythmic peal. From the high and narrow windows there came a flood of light. I wanted to go in, but the foreman said there was plenty of time, and he remained standing and talked and joked with the other young fellows, and filled his pipe.

Finally all the bells were ringing; the organ began to play, and we all went in.

How much finer everything was than on Sundays! The lights burning on the altar were brilliant white stars and the gilded tabernacle shone with a beautiful lustre. The sanctuary lamp was burning with a low red flame. The upper part of the church was so dark that the beautiful ornaments of the nave could not be seen. Dark human figures sat in the pews or stood alongside of them; the women were wrapt in their shawls and coughed. Many had lighted candles in front of them and joined in the singing when the *Te Deum* resounded from the organ-loft. The foreman led me between rows of benches to a little side altar where several people were already standing. There he lifted me on a bench so that I could see a glass cabinet standing between two Christmas trees and lighted up with two candles, whispering, ''There, now you can see the little manger!'' He left me standing there gazing through the glass. A little old woman came up and whispered: ''Well,

VILLAGE POLITICIANS

From the Painting by Wilhelm Leibl

[illegible] NEW YORK

child, if you want to look at those things someone must explain them to you." And she told me what the figures in the glass case were.

I looked at them. The figures were dressed like our hired-help or like older peasants. Mary alone excepted. She was draped in long lines of blue, reaching from head to foot. St. Joseph himself wore green hose and short knee-breeches made of chamois-skin.

When the *Te Deum* had been sung, the foreman came again and lifted me down from the bench, and we took our places in a pew. Then the sacristan went about and lit all the candles in the church and everyone, the foreman included, took a bit of candle from his pocket and, lighting it, stuck it on the chair-back in front of him. Now it was so light in the church that one could see the decorations in the ceiling very clearly.

Up in the organ loft violins, trumpets and kettle-drums were tuning; and when the little sacristy bell tinkled, the priest, in his shining vestments, accompanied by acolytes and torch-bearers clad in red, stepped up to the altar, amid the deep-toned organ peals, the beat of drums and the blare of trumpets.

The rising incense wrapped the brilliantly lighted high-altar as in a veil. Thus high-mass was begun and thus midnight beamed and sounded and rang. During the Offertory all the instruments were silent and two clear voices sang a beautiful shepherd's song, and during the *Benedictus* a clarinet and two bugles yodled a cradle-song. While the Gospel was read and during the Elevation, one could hear, coming down from the organ-loft, cuckoo and nightingale notes as in the midst of sunny spring.

My child-soul was deeply affected by the splendor of the Christmas service, but I did not brim over with ecstasy: I remained very sober, calm, and felt the solemnity of it all.

But during the music my thoughts went back to father, mother and granny at home. "They are now kneeling around the table with its lone candle," I thought, "or else, they are asleep and it is dark in the room and only the clock is ticking, and a deep silence lies over the forest-covered mountains, and Christmas has spread over the whole world."

When, at last, the mass was ended, the little tapers on the backs of the chairs died down, and the sacristan, with his long-handled snuffers, went around again to put out the lights on walls and images and altars. Those on the high altar were still burning when the last joyous, festive march resounded and people thronged out of the church.

When we came again into the open it was not as dark as before midnight, despite the thick fog that had settled down from the mountains. The moon must have risen, the torches were not lit again. The clock struck one, but the schoolmaster was already ringing the matin-bell for Christmas morning. I cast a last glance at the church windows; the festal splendor had vanished, and I saw only the dim red light of the sanctuary lamp.

Then, when I wanted again to cling to the foreman's coat I could not find him. Some people whom I did not know were about me, talking and starting for home. My companion must be ahead of us, I thought. I ran after him and quickly passed several people so as to overtake him. I ran as fast as my little legs could carry me. I came through the dark forest and the fields, across which a biting wind was blowing, so that I scarcely had any feeling in my nose and ears although otherwise I felt quite warm. I passed houses and groups of trees. The people who at first had been on the road now left it one by one. I was alone and had not yet overtaken the foreman. Then it occurred to me that he might be behind me, and I concluded to go home by myself as fast as I could. Black specks lay here and there—the charred coals of the pine-knots which their bearers had shaken off when coming to the church. I determined not to look at the trees and bushes that stood beside the road, emerging weirdly out of the fog; I was afraid of them. I was especially afraid as often as a path crossed the way, since at cross-roads the Evil One loves to stand waiting with his clinking treasures with which to allure poor human beings. The stable-boy had said, it is true, that he did not believe these tales; still there must be such things, else why would people talk so much about them? I was very much wrought up, I turned my eyes in all directions, looking for some ghost or spectre. Finally I determined not to think of such nonsense any longer; but, the more I so determined, the more tenaciously it clung to me.

I had now come to a path which, I thought, would lead me from the road, down through the woods into the valley on the other side. I took it, hurrying along under the far-reaching branches of the trees. Their tops swayed in the wind and now and then great masses of snow fell down beside me. In places it was so dark that I could scarcely see the trees unless I ran against them; so dark that I could not help losing the path. I did not mind this greatly, for the snow-fall had not been heavy, and the ground was smooth and level. Soon, however, it became steep and steeper, and under the snow lay tangled growths of bramble and bilberry. Now the trees stood no longer in serried ranks, but scattered here and there, some leaning very low and others, half uprooted, were held up by their comrades or, lying on the ground, their branches waving in mid-air in wild confusion. I had not noticed these things on our way to the church. I could scarcely proceed, so difficult was it to force my way through tangled brush and branches. Whenever the snow-crust broke, the unyielding whortleberries reached to my breast. I knew I had lost my path; could I but reach the valley and the brook, I would ascend the stream and so at last come to the mill and to our meadow.

Snow fell into my little jacket pockets, snow clung to my trousers and stockings, and the water ran into my shoes. I had grown very tired at first, climbing over fallen rubbish or winding my way through the undergrowth, but now all weariness had left me. I cared not for the snow, I cared not for the bilberry and other bushes that often struck me in the face, but hurried on. At times I fell, then jumping up again all fear of phantom shapes seemed gone; I thought of nothing but the valley and our house. I did not know how long I had been struggling through the wilderness, but I felt strong and agile; fear drove me on.

Suddenly I stood on the edge of a precipice. Down in the depths lay a gray fog-bank, pierced by tree tops here and there. The forest had receded, the sky was clear, a half moon hung above me. Facing me and far beyond I could see nothing but strange-looking, cone-like, wooded hills.

It must be that below me lay the valley and the mill; I seemed to hear the roaring of the brook, but it was the voice of the winds in the forest beyond. I went to right and left, looking for a foot-path that should lead down; I found a spot that promised to let me descend past junipers and over rubble, bare of snow. The way seemed to lie open for some distance but, just in time, I clung to a root and thus saved myself from plunging headlong down a sheer precipice. Now all advance was barred. I crouched down in utter weariness. Below me lay the cloud-bank with its black tree tops. Excepting the roaring wind in the forest I heard no sound; I knew not where I was. If a deer were to come now, I should ask the way—perhaps it could point it out, for on Christmas night animals have the gift of human speech!

I rose to climb upwards again; the rubble moved beneath my feet so that I could not advance. My hands and feet ached. Then I stood still and cried for the foreman. My voice reëchoed slowly and indistinctly from the woods and rocky walls.

Then I heard nothing but the roaring of the wind.

The cold cut to my very bones.

Again I called the foreman with all my might. And again came no answer save the long echo. Now fearful terrors came upon me. I called in quick succession my parents, my granny, all our hired men and maids; but all in vain.

Now I began to cry piteously.

I stood there trembling and my body cast a long shadow down the naked rocks. I walked back and forth above the sheer wall to keep from freezing; I prayed aloud to the Christ-child, that He should come to my aid.

The moon hung high in the dark sky.

I could no longer weep or pray, I could scarcely move. Trembling, I cowered beside a rock and thought: "Now I shall sleep, all this is but a dream, when I awake I shall be at home or in heaven."

Then, suddenly, I heard a crackling in the junipers above me, and soon I felt something touch me, something lift me up. I wanted to scream, but could not; my voice seemed frozen. I kept my eyes closed in dread. My hands and feet seemed paralyzed; I could not move. I felt warm, it seemed as if the mountains rocked me.

It was yet night when I awakened, but I was standing before our house and the chained-up watch dog barked furiously. A figure had set me down upon the firmly trodden snow, had given a violent knock against the door and hurried away. I had recognized the figure,—it was Mosswaberl.

The door flew open and granny rushed toward me, exclaiming, "For God's sake, here he is!"

She carried me into the warm room, but quickly back into the hall-way; there she set me down on a chest and ran to the door and repeatedly gave a penetrating whistle.

She was all alone in the house. When the foreman had come back from church and had not found me there, and when the others had come without me, all went down into the woods and into the valley and on the other side up to the highway, looking for me everywhere. Even mother had gone along, calling for me at every step.

When granny was sure that it was safe to bring me back into the warm room, she did so, and when she pulled off my shoes and stockings they were sticking together and frozen to my feet. Then she rushed again to the door and repeated her shrill signal. She brought in a bucket of snow and put my bare feet into it. When I stood in the snow I felt such a pain in my toes that I groaned and moaned; but granny said: "It's all right if it hurts, then your feet are not frozen."

Soon after the red morning rays shot through the window, and the searchers came back one by one. Then father came and last of all, when granny had whistled time and time again, just as the sun was rising over the Wechsel-Alps, mother returned. She came to the bed to which they had taken me, and by which father sat. She was very hoarse.

She told me to go to sleep and curtained the windows so that the sun should not shine into my face. But father thought that I should not sleep as yet; he would like to know how I had got away from the foreman without his knowing it, and where I had been.

I told him how I had lost my way and how I had got into the wilds, and when I told him of the moon and the black woods and of the roaring wind and the sheer rock-wall, father said to mother, in a voice almost inaudible: "Wife, let us thank God that he is here again, he was on the edge of the Trollwand!"

Then mother gave me a kiss on the cheek—a thing she did but rarely—and held her apron to her face and went away.

"But how did you get home, I'd like to know, you scamp?" To this I replied that I did not know; that, after sleeping long and being rocked, all at once I had found myself before our house and that Mosswaberl had stood there, beside me. Father asked me once more about this last, but I said that that was all I knew.

Then father said that he was going to church to high-mass, because today was Christmas, and that I should now go to sleep.

I must have slept many hours for, when I awoke, twilight was falling and the room was almost dark. Granny was sitting beside the bed, nodding, and I heard the crackling hearth-fire in the kitchen.

Later, when our people were at the evening meal, Mosswaberl sat among them.

She had been crouching in the churchyard, near the grave of her husband, during the morning service. And father had stepped up to her and had brought her home.

Nothing could be got out of her about what had taken place the night before, except that she had hunted for the Christ-child in the forest; then she came to my bed and looked at me; I was afraid of her eyes.

There was a room in the back part of our house in which we stored old, useless things, leaving them to be covered with spider-webs.

This room father now gave over to Mosswaberl, and put a stove, a bed and a table in it.

And she stayed with us. Often, indeed, she still roamed the woods, bringing home moss; then again she went out to the church and sat for hours by her husband's grave. Nothing could induce her to go to her old home, where, in all likelihood, she would have been as lonely and homeless as anywhere.

We could not learn anything of her earlier days; we only surmised that the woman had once been in good circumstances and certainly in her right mind and that the loss of her husband had bereft her of her reason.

We all loved her because of her quiet and contented ways; no one ever suffered the least harm from her. The watchdog only could not be appeased; he barked and tugged furiously at his chain whenever she crossed the yard. But we mistook the animal. Once, when his chain broke, the dog bounded toward the woman and, leaping up at her, he licked her face.

Then came a time, in the late autumn days, when Mosswaberl sat almost constantly in the churchyard. The dog, instead of barking lustily, howled for hours, so that granny, who herself had become quite feeble, said, "Someone hereabouts must be going to die soon; the dog is whining so; God comfort him!"

Shortly after, Mosswaberl took to her bed, and when the winter days had come, she left us.

She held my father and my mother by the hand in her last moments, and said: "God repay you all, a thousand, thousandfold, in this world and in heaven!"

HOW MEISENSEPP ("TITMOUSE-JOE"*) DIED

We had in our house a "Life of Christ, of His Mother and of Many Saints of God.—A Spiritual Treasure by the Rev. Father Cochem."

It was an old volume, the pages of which had turned gray; its chapter initials were large, quaint characters in black and red. The wooden cover was worm-eaten here and there, and mice had nibbled at one of its leather clasps. Since grandfather's death, there was no one in the house who could read it. Small wonder, then, that the worms had installed themselves in the "Life of Christ," and were drawing their material sustenance from the "Spiritual Treasure."

Then I came along—I had just learned to read—and chased away the worms, only to become a bookworm myself. Every day I read to our household from the "Life." The new practice did not commend itself to our hired help, male and female, for they had to restrain their joking and yodling while I read. The older ones, those who had become somewhat more godfearing, listened devoutly; "it sounds as if the priest were preaching," they said, "so much expression and such a voice."

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* The sobriquet well illustrates the system of naming in vogue among the German and Austrian peasants. Usually some peculiarity, trade or business, or other distinguishing feature (cf. "Knee-Slider Jochem," p. 336) is used as an addition to the Christian or given name. Family names, though recorded in the parish register, never gain popular currency.

I soon earned the reputation of being a fine reader and was much sought after. If anyone in our neighborhood lay very sick, if he were on the point of death, or had died, and people had to sit up with the body, my father was requested to have me read to them. Whenever this happened I took the heavy "Life of Christ" under my arm and set out. It was a very heavy load for me, I being, at that time, a wee bit of a fellow.

Late one evening—I had already gone to sleep in the cool and fragrant hay-loft, which was my bedroom in summer—I was awakened by the hired man who pulled at my coverlet. "Get up quick, Peter, get up! Meisensepp has sent his daughter, he'd like to have you come and read to him, as he is about to die. Get up quick, Peter."

So I arose and dressed hastily. Then I took my book and accompanied the girl across heath and woods. Sepp's cabin stood all by itself in the heart of the forest.

In his younger days Sepp had been a woodsman, a forest-guard; of late he had made a living by filing saws for the lumber-men. Now, all of a sudden, came this sickness.

As the girl and I walked across the wilderness in the still star-lit night, neither of us said a word. Silently we walked side by side. Just once the girl whispered: "Peter, let me have the book, I'll carry it."

"You can't," I replied, "why, you are even smaller than I."

After walking a couple of hours the girl remarked, "There, there's the house already!"

We saw the dimly lighted windows of the cabin. As we came nearer, the priest met us; he had administered the last sacrament to Sepp.

"Will father get well again?" the girl asked.

"He isn't so very old," the priest replied; "as God wills, as God wills."

Then he went away, and we entered the house.

It was a very small cabin and, like the rest of those which the foresters built, had its living room, bedroom and kitchen all in one. A burning pine-knot, held in an iron fastener on the hearth, veiled the ceiling with smoke. Near the hearth lay two little boys, fast asleep. I had seen them in the woods where we had gathered mushrooms and berries—our charges, the cattle, getting away from us in the meantime. They were somewhat younger than I. Sepp's wife sat leaning against the hearth, nursing her babe. She gazed vacantly into the flickering flame of the pine-knot. Behind the stove, in the only bed in the cabin, lay the sick man. He was asleep; his thin, wan face, his closely cropped hair and beard made his head look smaller than when I had seen him on his way to or from church. He breathed feverishly through half-opened, pallid lips.

As we came in, the woman arose softly, excused herself for having troubled me to come at this time of the night, and asked me to sit down to the table and eat some omelet which the Reverend Father had not finished and which was still on the table.

Soon I sat on the very spot the priest had made warm and ate with the fork which he had used.

"He is sleeping fairly well," the woman said in a low voice, pointing to the sick man. "A while ago he was constantly picking at his covers."

I knew it was looked upon as a bad sign when a sick person pulls and picks at his covers: he is restless and wants to dig his grave, people say. So I answered: "Yes, father did that too when he was sick with typhoid; but he got well again."

"I think so too," she said, "and the priest said the same thing. I am glad though that Sepp was able to attend to his confession so nicely, and I am quite encouraged—he may get well again—only," she added in a whisper, "only the light flickers so much."

It is a common belief that, if the light in a sick room burns fitfully, someone in that house will die soon. I myself held this belief; yet in order to allay her fears I said, "There's too much draft in the room, the window doesn't fit tight; I feel it too." She put the slumbering child down on the straw on which the girl, who had come for me, had fallen asleep. Then we stuffed some tow into the window cracks.

Soon the woman said: "You'll stay here tonight, won't you, Peter? I would not know what to do for loneliness. If he wakes up, you will read for us, won't you?"

I opened the volume and hunted for a suitable passage. But Father Cochem did not write much that might be comforting to poor, suffering mankind. Father Cochem was of the opinion that God is infinitely just and man- and womankind unspeakably bad, and that nine-tenths of them went straight to hell.

It may indeed be, I thought to myself, that this is so; but then one must not say it, people would only worry and, very likely, be as bad as ever. If they had wanted to do better, they would have done so long ago.

Those terrifying thoughts lurked like a hissing adder in every part of Father Cochem's book. In the presence of pert, conceited people, people who only listened to me because of my "loud preacher-voice," I delighted in thundering forth the horrible fate of the damned. But when I sat reading to a sick person, I frequently had to exert my ingenuity to soften Father Cochem's harsh expressions when he came to speak of death and judgment, of heaven and hell. I had to make great efforts to impart to the meditations of the denunciatory priest a softer coloring.

And so today, while seemingly reading from the book, I purposed to repeat to Sepp words from another Book, words that spoke of poverty and patience, of love to man and of the true imitation of Christ which would lead us—when our hour had come—gently to eternal rest.

At last Sepp opened his eyes. He turned his head, looked at his wife and his sleeping children, then he noticed me and spoke in a loud and very distinct voice: "You have come, Peter, have you? God bless you for it, but I'm afraid we will not have any time for reading today; Anna, wake the children, please.''

The woman gave a start, gasped as though her heart had stopped beating; then she said softly, ''Are you not feeling so well, Sepp? You had a good sleep.''

He noticed at once that her calmness was only pretended.

''Don't feel so bad, wife,'' said he, ''this is the way things go. Wake the children; but gently, so that they won't be frightened.''

The woman went where the children lay and with a trembling hand aroused the sleepers, who jumped up but half-awake.

''Please, please, Anna, don't handle the children so roughly!'' the sick man protested, his voice becoming weaker, ''and let Martha sleep—she is too young to understand.''

I kept my seat at the table a little to one side, seeking to control my feelings. They all gathered about the sick man, sobbing.

''Never mind, children,'' said Sepp, ''mother will let you sleep longer tomorrow. Josephine, pull your chemise together, so you'll not take cold. And now—you must be good children and do what mother says, and when you are grown up, help her and do not leave her. I have worked hard all my life and yet I cannot leave you anything except this cabin and the little garden and an acre or two of ground and the adjoining wood lot. If you want to divide the little I leave you, be fair to each other. But you had better keep things together and work and save. That is all the will I need to make; I love you all alike. Think of me at times and remember me in your prayers now and then. And you two boys, I beg of you, don't take to poaching; no good comes of it. Promise me. There! Of course, if one of you would take to filing saws—I've earned many a penny doing it—we've got the tools. And then, you know, when you want to raise potatoes in our field, don't plant them before May. What my father used to say is quite true; in planting potatoes the old rule holds good: 'Plant me in April and I come if I will; but plant me in the May sun and I am sure to come.' Don't neglect such little sayings. There now, go back to bed again, children, so you won't take cold; always take good care of your health; health is the best thing one can have; now go to bed again, children."

"I do not like his talking so much," the woman whispered to me. When very sick people are over-talkative, it is regarded as an unfavorable sign.

Now he lay completely exhausted on his bed. The woman lit a taper to put into his hands.

"Not yet, Anna, not yet," he murmured, "a little later; but I may have a sip of water, may I not?"

After taking it he said: "There, fresh water tastes very good. See that nothing happens to the well. Oh yes, don't let me forget it: you know my black trousers and the blue coat; and outside, behind the door, where I keep the saws, my planing-board leans against the wall;—lay that across the grind-stone and the bench. Tomorrow morning when Holzjosel comes, he will help to lay me on it. What is to be done with me at the church you know well enough. My brown overcoat and the broad-brimmed hat I give to the poor. You can give Peter something, too, for having come up. Perhaps he won't object to reading something when they sit up tomorrow night. The weather will be fine tomorrow, but don't go too far away; something might go wrong when the candles burn out there on the porch. And afterwards, Anna, look in the straw-tick; you will find an old stocking, there's a little money in it."

"Sepp, don't try to talk!" sobbed the woman.

"You are right, Anna—but I must finish what I have to say. We'll not be together long, now. We've lived together twenty years, Anna. You have been my all; nobody can repay you for what you have been to me. I'll not forget it, neither here nor in the hereafter. I am only glad that in this last moment I can yet talk to you and that I still have my senses."

"Don't, don't die so hard, Sepp!" breathed the woman, bending over him and peering into his face.

"No," he said calmly, "I am like my father; easy live and easy die. You, too, must do so and don't take it too hard. Even if each of us gets over there alone, we nevertheless belong to each other, and I shall save a little place for you, close to my side, Anna, close to my side. Only, Anna, I beg of you, bring up the children well."

The children were sleeping. Everything was still, and it seemed to me that I heard a rattling sound somewhere in the room.

Suddenly Sepp cried out: "Now, Anna, light the candle, quick!"

The woman ran about the room in an endeavor to find something with which to light the taper, although the pine-knot was burning. "He is dying," she screamed. But when the red wax-taper burned, when she put it into his hand, when he held it peacefully with both hands and when she took the holy water from the shelf, she became, seemingly, very calm, and prayed aloud: "Jesus, Mary, comfort him. All ye saints of God be with him in his hour of death, do not let his soul be lost. Mary, I appeal to thy Seven Sorrows. Thou, his guardian angel, lead him into life everlasting when his soul departs."

And she prayed, long and fervently. She did not sob nor weep; not a tear was in her eye; she was the humble suppliant, the intercessor.

Finally she ceased, bent over her husband, watched his faint breathing and whispered: "God be with you, Sepp, remember me to my parents and all our kin over there; God be with you, dear husband. The holy angels accompany you, and the Lord Jesus is waiting for you at Heaven's gate."

He may not have heard her any longer. His pallid, half-opened lips gave no answer. His eyes looked staring at the ceiling. And the wax taper which he held in his folded hands burned; it did not flicker; motionless, steady and bright, like a snow-white blossom, the flame pointed upward—his breathing no longer affected it.

"—— It's all over—he's dead!" cried the woman in a shrill and piercing voice. Then she sank upon a low stool and burst into tears.

The children now waking up again wept likewise, only the youngest smiled.

The hour lay heavy upon us.

Finally the woman—the widow—arose, dried her tears and closed Sepp's eyes.

The taper burned till dawn.

A messenger carried the news through the forest. A woodman came to the cabin. He sprinkled the corpse with holy water and murmured: "Thus they join the ranks, one by one."

Then they dressed Sepp in his best apparel, carried him out on the porch and laid him on the planing-board.

I left the book on the table for the wake of the night or two following, when I had promised to read. As I was about to go, Sepp's widow brought a green hat with a fan-shaped chamois-beard stuck under the band.

"Would you like to take the hat along for your father?" she asked, "Sepp always liked your father. You may keep the chamois-beard for yourself as a keepsake. Say a *pater-noster* for Sepp if you happen to think of it."

I thanked her, cast an unsteady glance toward the bier; Sepp lay stretched out, holding his folded hands across his breast. Then I went out and down through the forest, so bright and dewy-fresh, so full of bird-song and flowery fragrance, so full of life.

And in the cabin, on that plank, lay a dead man.

I can never forget the night and the morning—the death in the midst of the infinite wellspring of life in the forest. I keep, even to this day, the chamois-beard as a remembrance of Sepp.

Whenever I am seized with a hunger for the world's joys, or when doubts come over me as to man's standing in God's grace, or when dread of my own death, either early or late, would torture me—I put Sepp's chamois-beard on my hat.

MY FIRST RIDE ON THE STEAM-CARS

My godfather, Knee-slider Jochem*—God rest his soul!—would believe anything, provided it was unnatural enough. What little he understood of man-made things he looked upon as coming direct from God; the many things he did not understand came, in his opinion, straight from the devil. Man, the most favored of creatures, had the ability, for example, to tan hides and to make boots and shoes from these, so that one's feet would not get too cold. This gift he had from God. But when he took to inventing lightning rods and the telegraph he did it, plainly, at Satan's suggestion. Jochem, then, regarded God as a good-natured, simple-minded, old man—just like himself—but the devil as a wily, cunning sly-boots, whose powers could not be successfully matched either by God or man, and who made a dupe of both at every turn.

But aside from the exalted opinion of Lucifer, Beelzebub, or whichever one of his many titles one may choose to give him, my godfather was a very sensible man. I am under obligations to him for many a pair of linen trousers and many an overfed stomach.

His most trusted defense against the wiles of the enemy was the pilgrimage church at Mariaschutz. It was a day's journey to that place, and Jochem made it every year. Though only a child I was quite fleet of foot (my little goat and I being the only creatures father could not overtake when he took after us with his whip), and godfather Jochem wished to take me along to Mariaschutz.

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*Cf. note, page 358.

"Take him, for all I care," my father said, "then the boy can have a look at the new railway they're building across the Semmering. I am told they've finished boring the hole through the mountain."

"God forbid," godfather exclaimed, "God forbid that we should look at that devil's contrivance! It's all a hoax; it's all a lie!"

"Perhaps it is!" father remarked and went away.

Godfather and I set out; we went over the Stuhleck mountains to make sure that we did not get into the valley where, according to what people were saying, the devil's wagon was running up and down. As we stood on the high ridge and looked toward the Spital bottoms below, we saw a brown worm—a little cloud of smoke floating over it—creeping along a sharply traced line.

"Jesus and Mary!" godfather exclaimed, "look down there! Run, boy, run!" And with that we ran down on the opposite side.

Toward evening we came into the valley, yet—either because godfather was unacquainted with the road, or because his curiosity had got the better of him (at times he was greatly afflicted with this failing), or because we had stepped upon some "stray-wort"—instead of being at Mariaschutz, we found ourselves standing before an enormous pile of rocks, behind which we saw a black hole, running straight into the mountain.

Godfather gazed at it for a long time, without saying a word; he only shook his head. At last he murmured: "Well, here we are; I suppose this is their new-fangled road, but it's a lie that they run in there!"

A cold draft, as from a burial-vault, came out of the tunnel. Further on toward Spital stood a little stone cottage with a tall pole before it; from which two fiery red balls were dangling. Suddenly we heard a noise coming from the direction of the pole and one of the balls moved up, as though drawn by some spectral hand. We were greatly frightened. That there was something supernatural about it all we could easily see. However, we stood there, rooted to the ground.

"Godfather Jochem," I said, "do you not hear a rumbling noise in the ground?"

"I do," he said, in a low tone, "it's thundering, it's an earthquake." Then he moaned piteously. A pitch-black monster came toward us on the iron road. At first it seemed to stand still, then, getting ever larger, it came nearer, puffing and snorting mightily, and belching great clouds of vapor from its throat. And attached to it——

"By the holy cross!" godfather cried, "see those houses hitched on to the thing!" And sure enough, instead of the locomotive's pulling a few little carts or runabouts, on which people could sit, there were houses with windows—a whole village of them—and real, live people looked through the windows, and how fast they went, and the frightful noise of it all! It was too much for our poor brains. "The Lord himself can't stop that," I thought to myself. Then my godfather, making a gesture of despair, cried out, "Upon my soul, they actually are running into that hole!"

And the monster with its hundred wheels was already out of sight. The rear-end of the cars had shriveled together; for a moment longer one could see a little red light attached to it, then all had disappeared. The ground rumbled dreadfully, while smoke poured out of the hole, quietly and lazily.

Godfather wiped the sweat from his face with his sleeve and stared into the tunnel.

Then he looked at me and asked, "Did you see that, my boy?"

"Yes, I did."

"Then it cannot have been a mere trick of the brain," Jochem murmured.

We took the road up the mountains; out of several tunnels the smoke was rising. The train passed directly under our feet, far down, in the bowels of the earth.

"They are lost as sure as is a Jew's soul!" godfather said. He was thinking of the passengers. "They've recklessly jumped into their own graves!"

Things were unusually quiet at the inn up on the Semmering; the spacious stables were empty, the tables in the guest-room and the horse-troughs out by the road-side were forsaken. The host, formerly the proud monarch of this highway, invited us very obsequiously to have luncheon.

"I've lost my appetite," my godfather answered; "sensible people do not eat much and I've learned a few things today." We stopped before the monument of Charles VI. (even then falling into ruins, nor has anyone undertaken to stay the ravages of time since), and gazed on the vast Austrian plains, spread out before us, and on their rocks and ravines. As we descended, we saw the train—tiny as a caterpillar—passing craggy, perpendicular mountain walls, or shooting across high bridges and dreadful gorges, or slipping along dizzy heights, in through one opening, out through another—all very strange!

"It beats all what folks can do nowadays," godfather muttered.

Night had fallen when we came to Mariaschutz.

We went to the church, where a little red lamp was always burning, and attended to our devotions.

Then we ate a little supper at the inn and, going past the chambers of the stable-maids, we reached the hay-mow where we were to sleep.

We lay there a long time. But the excitement produced by the new and strange experiences of the day and a sort of homesickness kept me awake. I supposed, however, that my godfather was already sunk in sweet sleep. Then, all at once, he said, "Are you asleep, boy?"

"No," I replied.

"Say, boy, the devil is riding me!"

I was greatly frightened. Who had ever heard the like, and especially in a place like Mariaschutz, where people came to pray?

"It must be that I did not sprinkle myself with holy water before going to bed," he whispered. "I can't rest, it's awful, boy!"

"What may be the matter?" I asked sympathetically.

"Well, when I go to holy communion tomorrow, it may pass off," he reassured himself.

"Are you in pain, godfather?"

"It's a crazy notion. What would you think, boy, shall we try it, being so near?"

As I did not understand what he had in mind I gave no answer.

"What could happen to us?" godfather continued. "If others do it, why can't we? I'll stand the expense."

"He's talking in his sleep," I thought to myself, listening attentively.

"They will open their eyes wide," he continued, "when we come home and tell them that we rode on the steam cars."

I was for the scheme, heart and soul.

"But it's a sin, nevertheless!" he murmured. "Well, I may feel better tomorrow; let us go to sleep now."

The next day we went to confession and to communion; then we slid around the altar on our knees. But as we turned homewards godfather thought we had better not decide on our plans too definitely; for the moment, he wanted to see the railway station at Semmering, so we went thither.

At the station we saw the other end of the hole. It, too, looked black as pitch. The signals indicated the approach of a train from Vienna. Godfather tried to strike a bargain with the railway official; he offered him two six-kreutzer pieces,—we would get off on the other side of the mountain, right where the hole ends.

"The train does not stop on the other side of the mountain, right where the hole ends," the official said, laughing.

"But if we want to get off?" insisted Jochem.

"You must go as far as Spital, two tickets will cost you thirty-two kreutzers."

Godfather declared himself ready to pay what was fair, but, poor as he was, he could not pay as much as the rich; besides neither of us was very heavy. All to no avail; the official would not be bargained with. So godfather paid. I had to contribute two kreutzers. Meanwhile the train, coming out of the next, the lower tunnel, came puffing into the station; I thought the awful thing would not stop. It hissed and spit and groaned—then it drew up sharp.

Godfather stood there like a chicken whose brains have been removed; so did I. We could not have managed to board the train, had the conductor not pitched my godfather into a compartment, and me after him. Already the signal was given for the departure of the train, and I heard Jochem say, as he stumbled into the compartment, "It's my death-knell." But we now noticed that there were seats in the car, almost like those in a church; and when we looked out of the window, "Jesus and Mary!" my godfather cried out, "don't you see that wall flying past?" Now it got very dark, and we saw that a little oil lamp was burning on the wall of our creaking little room. There was a rushing and a roaring outside as of mighty waterfalls dashing down, and we heard fearful shrieks, one after another. We were traveling underground.

Godfather sat with his hands folded in his lap and muttered: "Well, well, who would have thought it would come to this? Why have I been such a triple idiot?"

We must have been underground for the space of some ten *paternosters* when it began to be light; outside were flying walls, flying telegraph poles and trees; we were running along the green valley.

Godfather nudged me: "Say, boy, that was just a little too much, but now I begin to like it. It's a fact, the steam car is a nice thing! Well, I declare, if we are not at Spital already! Say, we haven't been riding long enough, we haven't had our money's worth. What if we keep our seats?"

I had no objection. I examined our compartment; I looked out into the country flying past us, but did not know what to make of it all. And godfather cried: "Well, boy, these folks know their business! How they will stare at home! If I had the money, I would let them take me up our mountain just as I am now."

"Mürzzuschlag!" the conductor called out. The train stopped; we left the car, dazed.

The gatekeeper, after taking the bits of pasteboard which had been given us before we got into the train, refused to let us go. "See here, uncle," he exclaimed, "these tickets were good for Spital only! That means paying the difference, and twice over at that—for two persons a florin and six kreutzers."

I stared at my godfather, godfather stared at me. "Boy," he finally said in a husky voice, "have you any money with you?"

"I haven't any money with me," I sobbed.

"I haven't another kreutzer," Jochem murmured. They took us to an office, where they made us turn our pockets inside out. All we had was a blue handkerchief—which did service for both of us and which they would not touch—a hard crust of bread, a very strong pipe, the certificate of confession from Mariaschutz and, finally, the leather purse containing nothing except a blessed brass-charm which my godfather carried with him in the firm belief that he would never be completely out of funds as long as he carried the sacred object in his purse. It had, indeed, proved its efficacy until today. Now, of a sudden, it had lost its power. We were permitted to take back our poor belongings after being detained at the station for hours, during which time high officialdom exercised its inquisitorial powers.

Finally, toward evening, at an hour when, after so rapid a journey as ours had been, we could easily have been at home, we were dismissed, only to make our long way thither in the darkness of the night.

As we slunk out of the station my godfather whispered to me: "These new-fangled steam cars—the devil is in them after all!"

STANDING GUARD

My father was suffering, at that time, from a tedious ailment. Scarcely anyone, excepting myself, ever looked after him. Wolf, the forest-guard, also dropped in occasionally, to sit on the bench by the stove and watch father enjoy the bit of venison he had brought. The venison really benefited my father so much that he said to me one day—it was in August, about the feast of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin: "Well, boy, I suppose I ought to turn my hand to something again. What do you think, am I strong enough for basket-weaving?"

So the next day we set out early to go up to the so-called forest-meadow, where we were sure to find plenty of willow-bushes. The meadow lay high up in the depths of the forest. Father halted frequently on the way, leaned on his stick, took a deep breath and asked me whether I did not want to have a bite of bread.

When we had reached the sheep-pasture, where the young larches were still gleaming in the morning dew, we saw a man dodging through the undergrowth. He had a deer thrown across his shoulders and trailed something like a rifle behind him. He crouched so low that we could only see a few tufts of coal-black hair.

When the figure had disappeared father stopped and asked me whether I had noticed it. "That was 'Black Tony,'" he added.

When Black Tony was in the neighborhood, everybody locked the doors.

"Yes, boy," my father said after we had seated ourselves on a fallen tree-trunk, "people like Tony have a hard time of it. He has never seen his father nor mother in all his life. They brought him from a foundling-home into this part of the country when he was a mere child. A charcoal-burner's wife took him in; of course not for charity's sake, but for the money she got out of it. As he grew up Tony roved through the woods, not a soul paid any attention to him, and so he got wayward and unmanageable. When the woman saw that her adopted son brought her only shame and disgrace, she said: 'Tony, you good-for-nothing, you can't stay here any more!'—'Where shall I go, then?' Tony asked her; but wherever he sought to find shelter, he found the doors closed against him. When people would not have him, he went to the animals—took to poaching. Last year Wolf managed to have him sent to prison; now that he has served his time, no one likes to meet him, although I do not think that he would harm anyone. He isn't bad naturally, only badly demoralized. There is no doubt of it, son, people are often pushed upon the downward road; then they keep sliding down and cannot check themselves."

We continued our journey slowly. After making our way through wide stretches of forests and shady ravines, we came, at last, to the meadow in the clearing. The Teufelssteinberg still shaded parts of it; but the long rows of willows, arching over a softly purling brooklet, gleamed in the sun with a silvery sheen. The meadow had already been mown and the hay taken away—a lonely stillness brooded over it. Blue gentian-bells fringed the field, and already the autumn crocus was in bloom.

We had come to the clearing to cut the willows which overhung the brook. Going across the meadow, we came to where the tall pines began again and where a red cross was standing, the little protecting hood of which was thickly covered with moss. Here we intended to rest a while before beginning our labors, look about at the trees, and eat a bit of bread.

But before father sat down he looked long and fixedly at one spot.

A man lay at the foot of a silver-fir—a forest guard with a rifle near him, his hair covering his forehead and eyes, one could not tell whether he was really as fast asleep as it seemed.

Finally, pushing me back with one hand, my father stepped toward him. Then we saw that the man lay in a pool of blood; the blood coming from a wound in his neck had already stopped flowing.

Father, clasping his hands, said very softly: "Now they've killed forester Wolf."

When I began to cry, father picked me up. Though he tried to appear calm, I felt his violent heart-beats.

Then he examined the dead man—his eyes were set, the lips livid and dry like parched ground—life had fled.

"We won't cut any willows to-day," father said, "now one of us must fetch somebody to take Wolf away, and the other will have to stay here in the meantime. A dead person must not be left alone before he is buried. Some animal might molest him. I had better hobble over to the wood-choppers, and you'll be a good boy and sit here by the cross."

A pang shot through me. How could my father want me to sit for hours by a corpse? But I did not know the road and could not have found the wood-choppers.

"Yes, boy, I know, it's a sad watch," he continued, "but somebody must keep it; we must do our Christian duty to Wolf."

I stared at the dead man.

My father took the little axe with which he had intended to cut the willows from his belt, lopped off some pine and fir branches, and covered the forester. Then he knelt before the green mound and repeated a *paternoster*. As he rose he said, "Well, my boy, do our brother the kindness to watch here. I will leave you the axe, keep it within reach. Some foxes or crows might come this way; I don't know of any other wild things hereabouts. You may go as far as the willows over there, but no further. I'll hurry as much as I can: by the time the shadows begin to lengthen, someone will be here, without doubt."

Then he put a piece of bread under a tree for me and went away. He went straight across the meadow which we had crossed before, and disappeared in the darkness of the woods.

I was now alone on the forest clearing; the lonely meadow, the gleaming willows and the peaceful mound at the edge of the woods were bathed in soft sunlight. I did not want to look at the strange bier: I stepped over to the willows, but my eyes were drawn constantly to the red cross and to that which lay beneath it.

Poor Wolf! I remembered very well how, a few years ago, he passed our house with his bride, on their wedding day. Bugles sounded, improvised mortars were fired off, making the windows of our house rattle. Wolf was then a fine young fellow; he wore a big bunch of flowers on his hat and a red ribbon hung about his neck, where now it was stained with a streak of blood.

I made my way along the willows. The twigs stirred and quivered. Grasshoppers jumped here and there. I parted the bushes and looked in upon the almost lustreless, lazy brook, under the thick network which they formed. A lizard with large spots came toward me; I beat a hasty retreat.

Then I began to measure the shadows of the trees with my short steps—when these begin to lengthen, people will be here. As yet the shadows got shorter and shorter. The sun stood high over the Teufelssteinberg; a bluish haze lay over the valley.

I returned to the cross and seated myself on the rock on which devout wayfarers, passing this way, knelt to say their prayers. The cross was quite tall; no Christ figure hung on it. It extended its arms wide as though seeking to embrace the whole forest.

I turned from the cross and the mound, and looked in the direction of the Teufelsstein.

A pale, blue sky arched over all; not a bird, scarcely a gnat, could be heard. It was a dreamy, early autumn day, brooded over by an eternal silence.

Poachers had shot him. I went across the meadow, saying to myself: "After I have crossed it ten times I will measure the shadows again." But the shadows withdrew under the trees, more than ever.

Then I went to the covered corpse and stood there a long time. I now scarcely felt afraid. Then I sat against the cross and ate a slice of bread. There was a sudden crackling sound—a deer had come up, and peeped through the trees.

The animal, sniffing, soon approached the mound. It need not fear this huntsman any more. Suddenly it bounded away in great leaps, toward the thicket, perhaps because it scented gunpowder in the rifle.

Finally, when I measured the shadows again, they had lengthened a bit. I must have been there for many hours.

Father was right as usual. I heard a sustained sound, an echo, in the woods. Someone was coming. It was not the woodchoppers, though, coming to take Wolf away, but straight across the meadow came a young woman. She carried a basket on her back and held a child, some three years old, by the hand. They were singing a merry children's song, and the little girl laughed and skipped over the soft grass.

I recognized the two; they were the wife and child of the forester.

They came nearer; when they saw me the woman said to the little one: "Look, Agatha; see that boy over there by the cross! He is saying his prayers; a very good boy he is."

Then she knelt on the stone and, folding her hands, said her prayers. The child did likewise, assuming a very sober mien.

I was indescribably sad. How could I have told them what lay under those branches? I went over toward the willows.

''There, sweetheart,'' the woman then said to the child, ''now I will go and cut some gentian; while I am gone, you may sit on these twigs and pick off the little cones. By and by father will come down from the Teufelsstein, and then we'll sit down and eat the sour-milk cheese I brought in my basket, and afterwards we'll all skip home together.''

She placed the child on the pile of twigs—on its father's bier. Then, taking her basket, she went toward a ridge where clusters of gentian were growing. From there she called out to me and asked what I was doing all alone in the clearing—whether I was lost or was, perhaps, hunting my goats?

I knew no answer. Pointing to a large snow-white butterfly, I said: ''That butterfly, just see how it flits about; see it fly!''

''You are a funny little man, so you are!'' the forester's wife remarked laughingly and went to her work.

Little Agatha played on the mound, she tugged at the branches and burrowed in them till, at last, she drew forth some object. Finally she became frightened and began to call for her mother.

After a while the woman came, the child held a ring toward her and said: ''See what I found, it is father's ring.''

The woman uttered a cry of astonishment: ''Child, how did you come by that?''

The child smiled, greatly pleased.

The woman set the child on the ground, cast a glance at the twigs, then uttered a piercing cry. She saw a half-covered human hand.

Like one possessed she rushed toward the pile of twigs, snatched the mass apart—in terrified, mad haste;—then, sinking back, she covered her face with her hands. Before her lay her murdered husband in his blood.

At that moment two woodchoppers, carrying a stretcher, came across the clearing. After kneeling down and praying silently, they lifted the dead forester on the bier, placed his gun at his side, and bore him away.

The basket was left standing among the gentian clusters, the woman, carrying the child in her arms, followed the bier. She did not utter a cry, she did not shed a tear. The pale, set face of the wife, the red-cheeked, bright-eyed curly-headed child, following the bier—I never can forget them.

I, too, started to go. The willows gleamed with a watery lustre, the long shadows of the firs lay aslant the meadow. The red cross stood silent and motionless in the dim shade of the firs on the forest edge.

The stretcher went swaying along in the direction of the distant forest-lodge. I went toward our own farmstead. As I approached I saw some sturdy young fellows leading a miserable-looking wretch. It was Black Tony. As we had seen him that morning in the young larch copse, father had suggested that he probably was the murderer. The judge came and the trial was held beneath the large ash that stood in our yard. Tony confessed to having taken the forester's life, from motives of revenge. They took him manacled to the city whence he had come as a child.

When I entered the house father sat by his bed, greatly moved. He took me on his knees and said: "My boy, this has been a bad day; I've borne a heavy burden to-day on your account."

We did not return to the meadow that year—though, since then, I have been there several times. The willows were still glistening and the tall firs stood there as of old. Their shadows retreat and advance as they do in life's uncertain course; their shadows advance and retreat like human life itself.

WHEN THE NIGHTS WERE BRIGHT

The summer had been very hot. The moss in the forest had become sere and brittle; one could see the grayish earth between the dried-up grass blades. Dead ants and beetles lay everywhere among the brown pine-needles. The stones in the brook beds were dry and white as ivory. Where, here and there, a little pool still managed to exist, a trout or some other water creature lay dying.

The air was heavy and the mountains—even those quite near—were wrapped in a blue haze. In the morning the sun shone red, the color of autumn beech-leaves,—then turned pale and lustreless, so that one could look him in the face; then he crept along the gray waste of the sky as though he were parched with thirst. Toward evening sharp-edged, gleaming clouds would often arise, and people begin to hope; but on the morrow the clouds had vanished and the night dew had been absorbed by the thirsty air.

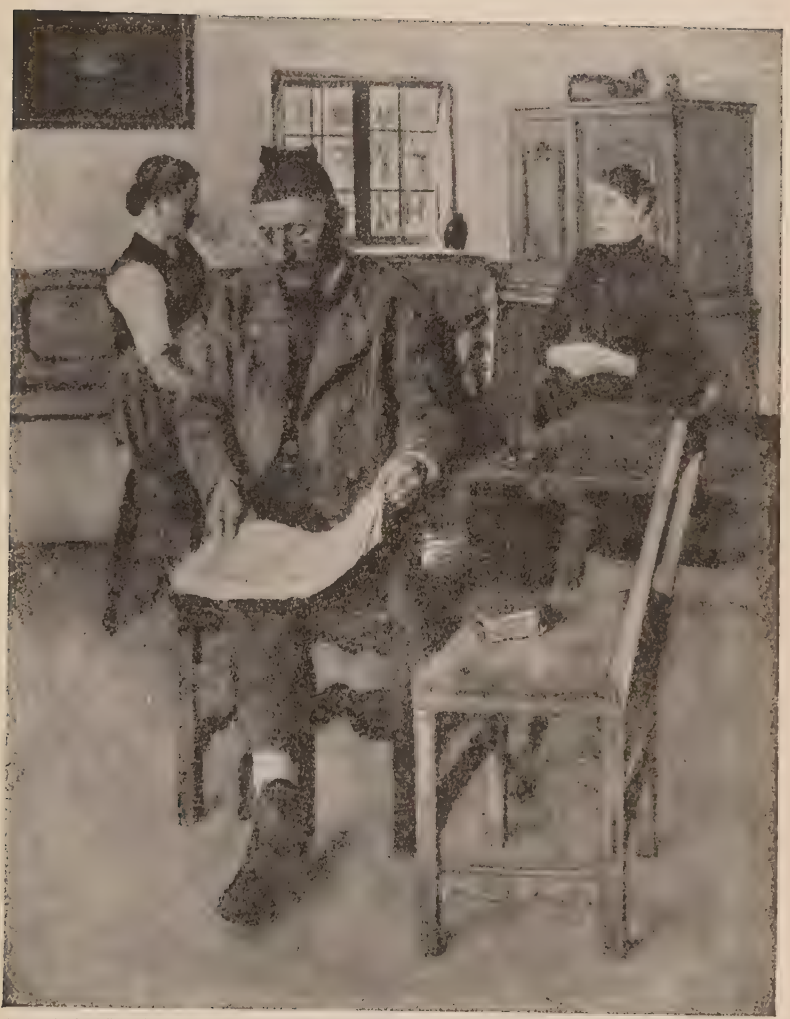
Down in the valley a day of prayer for rain had been appointed. So the people from our parts went down in great numbers. Our hired man Marcus and I alone did not go. "It will rain when it gets ready and not before; what is the use of whimpering? If a Supreme Being placed us here, it is not likely that He is weak-minded or has forgotten us. If He has no head, and has made the world with His hands, only to kick it to pieces again with His feet, why then it is not likely that He has ears. What's the use of all this puling and praying?"

Good people, what can be said in answer to this?

"Marcus is an old skeptic,"—that is what can be said.

Just then the herdsman from the Riegelberg burst in through our door; he was speechless with excitement. With his two fore-fingers he pointed through the open window; Marcus, following the motion toward the Filnbaum ridges, clapped his hands together in amazement.

From beyond the forest-ridge, a huge cloud of red-tinged smoke came rolling up, darkening the sky.



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THE NEWSPAPER READER

"That may make trouble," Marcus exclaimed, reaching for his axe and hastening away.

Ever broader and denser the threatening black mass came rolling up. I began the "puling and praying," which, according to our hired man, were useless. It proved to be so, as we soon saw.

On the sunny slopes of the Filnbaum forest, where the dry underbrush lay, hard by the dried-up copse of young larches—there the flames had started. No one knew how. They may at first have skipped lightly from twig to twig, then, rising, leaped from branch to branch with fluttering wings. Then suddenly, the fiery element burst into fury and unfurled its red, victorious banner. The trees, now taller, stood in serried ranks; from their branches hung long festoons of moss; their trunks, injured years ago by heavy hail, were resinous from root to crown. Hurrah, how the fiery tongues licked and flared. And in the ravine there was a hissing as from a brood of vipers, and everywhere terrific energies were released.

A few woodchoppers ran aimlessly hither and yon, cursing and crying for help. But the forest and its cabins were deserted; everyone was at the procession, down around the village church. When, some hours after, they returned, the heart of the forest was ablaze. A feverish quiver filled the air; the roaring, crackling flames spread in all directions. Branches were hurled down, trees brought low and, as they fell, the sparks shot up once more into the billowy smoke. Blistering air currents, rushing through the branchless trees, fanned the flames into new life; they themselves begot the storm on which they rode. Oh, irresistible, insatiable element! It consumes as long as it lives, and lives as long as it consumes; it consumes a world and, could it reach them, a thousand worlds. No other power can attain such boundlessness; it is for this that the Seer represents it as the Last Victor, as the Ruler of Eternity.

Our people worked and toiled bravely; many a one had to be borne away, half-burned. Marcus noticed these fearful mishaps, but he did not wail, he did not despair, he was quiet activity itself. His resinous clothing was already beginning to take fire. Then he rushed to the brook bed and rolled in the sand till it clung to every part of his sticky garb. Now he was armored! He lopped off branches, he felled trees—O God, all to no avail! The blistering wave swept onward; the bared branches all about, the singed needles of the twigs were waiting for the oncoming, devouring flame only to burst into a blaze before it reached them.

Now the workers, who had gathered from everywhere, sought to out-manœuver the flames and check them by advancing some distance and felling the trees; but the fiery fiend reached out his arms in various directions. Toward evening a high wind arose and whipped the mighty, fiery banners into shreds, thus scattering the element a thousand-fold. There was a weird reverberation in the air, and a lurid glare lay over the broad expanse of the dark woods.

Exhausted and helpless, the men stopped their labors, the women cleared the cabins of their few contents, but knew not whither to turn for safety.

The fire had not yet reached the deeper gorges; there, the soft whispering of the pines could still be heard, though the night sky gleamed a rosy-red and, at times, high in the air, a fiery dragon swept along. Then again, a flock of twittering birds would come, the homeless little creatures whirred about aimlessly, and terrified fawns and deer approached our human habitations.

''We will all share the lot of these poor creatures!'' one woman moaned, ''there is no human possibility of saving the forest—it is burning, burning! Oh, Christ, this is the Day of Judgment!''

The horrors lasted for days.

From our house on the heights we could see the flames shoot up over in the Filnbaum and the Felsenleiter forests.

A murky veil lay spread over the entire region, and a pungent odor clung to our nostrils. Our heights were shrouded in smoke, so that at times we could scarcely see the sun. Instead we saw a murky, reddish disk, hanging above us, often obscured by whirling vapors, yet never wholly effaced. We watched the fire creeping toward us; it climbed the heights and dipped into the gorges, then, finally, it came marching up our slope. No need now, of an evening, to light the pine-knot in our house; within an easy walking distance the pine woods were aflame.

Our cattle had long since been driven to the upland pasture, the furniture we had taken into a wide, open field. Half crazed men and women gathered around our house. One of the least perturbed was old father Martin, whose cabin had been burned: he picked cranberries by the light of the forest fire.

On the fifth night, when we lay huddled in a corner of our empty living room, we were suddenly aroused by a loud, roaring sound and Marcus, who stood, stationed on the roof, shouted: "That's right, that's right, that is what I like to see!"

A storm had arisen and raged in the burning forest, affording a magnificent, though terrible sight. We heard a roar and a rushing as of wild waters dashing between the trunks of trees. But the fires were driven in a direction opposite to our house; it was that which old Marcus had liked to see. The flames were now in wild retreat; they leaped over whole stretches of forest, starting afresh in new and distant parts.

"This is the end, it is all over!" the people said helplessly, with mouths agape. Yes, verily, "roast-pigeon" fell from the air. A few, seeing the bared hill-sides, even regained their wonted humor. "We must be approaching a great festival, seeing that even the mountains have their shaggy locks trimmed." It was more like Ash-Wednesday.

When the storm had subsided, we had a heavy down-pour of rain. The rain lasted for days and on the hills the clouds hung lazily. The smoke from the smouldering tree trunks mingled with them for a long time—but, finally, the fires were out. A damp, frosty mist lay over the land,—autumn days had come.

But the forest does not end with its destruction and after every end there's a beginning.

Autumn mists were spinning the snow. That winter we could see from our windows many white stretches we had not seen before. But only with the return of spring could we judge of the havoc the fire had made. Everywhere charred ground, rust colored rocks, half burnt roots, and here and there blackened tree trunks. Now people came with pick-axe, spade and plow. They turned over the blackened sod, they sowed the new fields with grain, they built shelters for the shelterless. And with the early autumn there came a bountiful harvest. No one in our parts had ever seen such golden splendors as were our grain fields, stretching into the hills. We had to join our efforts to garner the vast stretches of bending heads of grain. I still remember the words, which our priest spoke on the occasion: "He maketh sore and bindeth up, He woundeth and His hands make whole—may His name be praised!" The next day he sent his men to fetch the tithes—and he had a right to them.

In the years following, field after field, reaching from the Filnbaum clear over to our house, was put under the plow, and for some thirty years the soil of the devastated region gave bread to man. To-day the people have scattered or are dead; and, lately, the young, green forest, is retaking the mountain-side. Fresh, infinite life is astir there—luxuriant vegetation, a happy world of animal creatures—a fresh and joyous manifestation of Creative Power.

THE DAIRY-MAID

One midnight in summer—I chanced to be at home at the time instead of at my work among the country folk—one midnight the snorer's chorus in my father's bedroom was suddenly interrupted.

There had been a sharp rap on the window pane and a harsh voice outside was heard to say: "You needn't be afraid, folks, there isn't any fire, there are no thieves nor robbers about, and the stars are still in the sky. But the dairy-maid's child up in the Steinlend lies dead and she would like to have the good people of Alpel help her to take care of the little one. That is all I wish to say. Now go to sleep again, good night!" The voice ceased and the retreating heavy mountain shoes were heard crunching in the sand.

We lay quietly a few minutes longer; finally there was a rustle in the straw and father, raising himself, said, "You heard it too, did you?"

"Yes, we've all heard it; the dairy-maid's child lies dead up in the Steinlend," we all repeated.

"It's very queer," said father, "did she have a child?"

"Yes, some three months old," came from the loft above where the hired man, Rüppel, had his bed.

"Well, that is strange," said father, "Rüppel, up there, seems to know about it;—who told you about it, Rüppel?"

No answer from the hired man; we thought he had gone to sleep again, yet we did not hear his snoring.

Father had put on his trousers hurriedly and paced the floor. He opened a window, but the man outside had gone. The stars shone in the silent sky.

Father muttered something, then closed the window and went to bed again. The snorer's chorus struck up once more but, from the loft above, one could hear the rustling of straw and something like suppressed sighing. Early next morning one of our neighbors came to tell us that during the night, someone had awakened him and said that a little child lay dead up in the Steinlend pastures and begged the people of the valley for burial.

Soon after, old Michael, the well digger, came along, greatly disturbed. He had had a weird dream the night before. He had seen a dead child on its bier on a flat rock, far up on the highest peak of the Steinlend-Alps. The clouds were sweeping over it, and the winds blew its locks about its face, and there was an awful, dead silence, and he felt his heart breaking with fear.

My father shook his kindly, shaggy head for a while and then he said, ''Well, someone must go up and see.''

But the Steinlend pastures were far up in the mountains and one could not be expected to make the long journey for nothing nor empty-handed. In the meantime other reports of the child's death reached us; so people got ready to go up.

Father asked Rüppel to make a little coffin, but it was strange to see the young fellow—usually so alert and willing to heed father's requests—refuse to do what had been asked of him. He was very handy at making things, good boards we had in plenty and the tools were there. Rüppel himself, though well and hardy as usual, would not touch a plane. He attended to other work about the place, but offered no reason for his unwillingness to make the little box.

So father set to making it himself, and toward evening the coffin was finished. He had even painted a little cross on the lid. Then it was filled with bread, meat, flour and eggs and carefully closed. A stout cord wound about it made it easier to carry.

And now father said, ''See here, you big fellow!'' meaning me. I was the oldest and as a matter of fact had reached the knife-mark on the door-jamb which indicated the ''soldier-stature.'' In my younger years I would often stand on tiptoe to touch the mark with my shock of hair, if in no other way. But now I cleared it without needing to reckon in my hair. My good mother wept many a tear because, in spite of my official release from military duties, she always saw me in her mind "on the bloody field" with my soldier comrades.

So father said, "See here, you big fellow! This is Sunday, you have time to go; take the little box up to the dairymaid in the Steinlend-Alps. She can get the funeral-meal with what is in the box; but go carefully so that you won't break the eggs."

I set out with my load in the direction of the bare mountain range.

Blue shadows lay in the lowlands and the valleys; the heights were smiling in the sunset's quiet glow. The coffined hams and eggs were by no means light.

I reached the cheese dairy long after dark. Several men and women were standing before the cabin; the dairy-maid was busy with her butter making. I saw no corpse, I saw no child; and when the maid went to the stalls to milk the cows, she sang a yodling song.

"Well, I am surely fooled this time!" I thought to myself. Yet the people looked very sober and were not surprised to see me coming with a coffin. And the maid sang because, otherwise, the cows would not have let down their milk. But when the milk was attended to, the young woman slipped from the cabin, going in the direction of a rocky ravine close by, through which a little mountain stream was threading its way.

A tremulous, dim red light lay athwart the rocky wall. I had followed the woman into the ravine and saw that the light came from a little oil-lamp burning in the dark recess. And near the little lamp, in the hollow of a huge boulder—so huge indeed that its outline could not be traced in the dark—lay an object, covered with a white sheet.

The woman drew back the sheet slowly and uncovered the face of a child. The light of the lamp threw a faint, rosy tinge upon the tiny cheeks and lips, which the woman now knelt down to kiss.

At her feet the spring came trickling through the rocks;

the woman dipped her fingers in its waters to wet the forehead of the child.

In Catholic countries it is the custom for those who gaze on the face of the dead to sprinkle it with holy water, as a last farewell. But in the high Steinlend region there is no priest to bless the water; and so the dairy-maid brought her dead child to the clear spring, in the hope that every drop of God's water contained His blessing.

Besides, there was no room nor suitable surrounding in the herder's cabin for laying out the little corpse. So the mother had bedded it in the eternal shelter of the rocks. The springlet murmured its sad, peaceful threnody, and the jagged fronds of wild-ferns and gentian bluebells fanned the stark, stiff little body, lying near.

When the maid noticed me she addressed the child: "They do not want us to be together any longer, dear little Lucie; they've come to take you away. Things will go on as they have always done; and I shall be alone!"

"What did little Lucie die of?" I asked sympathetically.

"Of croup;—one moment full of overflowing life—three hours afterward, dead. Oh, but my Lucie was so sweet and dear, she was my child,—my child," burst from her agonized heart. Then she went on, "I carried the little baby to this place as soon as she was dead. Here, directly here, beside the rock, I loved to sit with Lucie, playing with her, singing to her or, on Sunday, praying with her. I meant not to say anything about the death of my child; what need is there of people knowing? What need have I of people in all this? The little thing is dead, and the church bells will not wake her again. I wanted to bury my little one there, at the foot of the rock, so that I could have her dear body near me always, as long as I live here. But it got noised abroad—just as if the winds had told it—so that now you come up with your help and sympathy, and, from pure kindness, you want to take away the dearest thing I have."

I knew not what to answer. But I said to myself, "She is right—why are matters so arranged? Why must all the dead be taken to the cemetery? Would it not be more sensible to have everyone lay his dead away where he would or could, so that he might care for the place with tender care? I myself would prefer to sleep in the forest, another in his garden-plot, or upon a sunny meadow, or on the quiet heath or the grassy plain where he lived his childhood, or in some other spot that he had learned to love. Such spots are more appealing than are the cemeteries where the multitudes of graves stifle one's reverence and love for his own dead." She was right, the dairy-maid of the Steinlend, when she wanted to lay her child near her, on the high mountain, among the rocks. Still we made ready to take the dead babe to the churchyard.

The dairy-maid did not let the fire on the hearth go out that night; she prepared the funeral-meal from the stores which I had brought in the coffin. And when the little box was thus emptied, I went to the ravine and placed the child in it. I laid a bit of fern upon its breast and sprinkled water on the cold, little forehead; then the herd-boy fetched the maid and said, "Now take leave of your child until you see it again on the Last Day."

She stepped up, took the little hand in hers and said, "There, take this christening-gift from your godfather with you; take my own too! I have nothing else to give. Good night! You are now one of God's angels; when I come to die, reach out your little hand, and do not forget your mother, Lucie, a thousand times good night!" Then she held a blue handkerchief to her face and staggered away.

Suddenly, just as I was about to nail down the coffin-lid, a figure leaped, as it were, from out of the dawn and, rushing up to the coffin, placed a little package in it and stammered: "You must take—something—from me too." Then the figure hastened away, to be seen no more.

I had recognized our hired man, Rüppel. He, too, had brought his baptismal present—a gift which people guard, esteeming it a sacred thing—and placed it in the coffin which I now closed. Why did he bring it? No man asked him the reason, but we all thought we knew. When I drove in the nails, the echoes from the rocks repeated every stroke, while the dairy-maid sat milking and singing to her cows, to drown the blows of the hammer.

Then the folk who had come from the valleys and neighboring Alpine pastures, sat down before the cabin and ate the funeral meal. That ended, the oldest one of us repeated a prayer. When the sun rose and the dewdrops on the grass glistened like little flames, I raised the coffin to my breast and in my arms, just as a child is carried, and carried it away. The people followed, repeating their prayers. Only one human being stayed behind and from the door followed us with her eyes, until the procession disappeared in the hollows. It was the mother of the child. She went to the ravine where the lamp stood, still burning in the sunlight. There, against the rocks, where her dearest treasure had lain, she sank down and burst into tears. And after weeping long and piteously she bathed her head in the cold waters, saying: "It is all over, it cannot be changed. I dreamed I had a child. O God, thou knowest—how well thou knowest—that this is true no more!" She went at her tasks and toiled ceaselessly until, at night, she sank on her bed, in utter weariness.

But we went down the mountain-side with the child, through green, living forests, where every tree and every bird greeted us, on toward the churchyard. There we placed the child that had seen the light of the sun but a few months before in its dark little grave.

MY FIRST APPEARANCE ON THE STAGE

Really I did not play very many foolish pranks in my youth—but, for that very reason, the few I did play were all the more foolish. My appearance on the stage at Krieglach certainly deserves a place with these.

A theatrical troupe had come to town and, as is usual in such cases, some of the villagers were engaged to take parts in the forthcoming play, if only to swell the receipts of the company. Being out of work—the tailoring business was not very brisk just then—I had come down to the village from my native hills, and, naturally enough, I interested myself greatly in the theatrical undertaking. Holtei's "String of Pearls" was to be given. My good friends, Anthony and George, had already selected their parts; the former was to be the Moor, the latter the Landowner. They desired me to take the part of the Corporal.

In my enthusiasm for the cause I accepted the rôle. But when I reflected upon the matter more carefully, I was frightened. I had an uneasy feeling as I walked through the village.

"The upshot of this business will be a failure," I said to myself, "I had better leave town this very day. But when the corporal deserts he will be flogged, so to speak, by evil tongues through the whole town. Stick to the post, then, and meet manfully whatever fate may decree!"

"Are we to have rehearsals to-day, George?" I asked, somewhat proud of my new dignity after all, as we met on the street.

"Oui, monsieur!" he replied. George is master tailor in the village; he speaks French, and had determined to employ that language exclusively as the medium of communication during his theatrical career.

"At what hour?" I asked.

"Sept heures, monsieur!"

"Thank you."

"Eh bien!"

We went toward the High Temple of the Muses—in the innkeeper's barn-loft. We bowed condescendingly in all directions, our fellow villagers regarding us with a certain, perhaps a pretended, awe.

We entered the dim halls, the home of art and spider-webs.

I was a little nervous, my teeth chattered. I disturbed some bats that, in default of a more suitable place, had taken possession of a paper royal-crown, evidently the remnants of a former show. With due modesty, be it said that I had committed my part well; still, when I gazed upon the ''boards that signify the world,'' and the wide cracks between, I——!

But, then, I was only a tailor at that time.

I staggered behind the wings, awaiting my cue; it was: ''for ourselves.'' But we were not playing for ourselves; we played for others, and especially for the poor troupe.

But now I had to venture out—out into life, full of struggle and stress! The empty benches are not severe critics. This was only a rehearsal.

The prompter whispered: ''Surely it isn't that tall gawk that works for the farmer?''

''For the farmer? What farmer?'' I asked myself. ''Oh, yes, I am to repeat it''—and I did so, stammeringly. I was in a cold sweat when, at last, I could repeat my two hundred words. But the worst was yet to come. Nevertheless I was already thinking of more important rôles. If I should begin some day, let us say, with Faust:

"I've studied now, philosophy
And jurisprudence, medicine,
And even, alas! theology."

but at that time I had not yet studied anything!

However, let that pass. Now the other two had their turn. I wished from my whole heart that they, too, would make a mess of it. ''I rejoiced in the ill fortune of others,'' Jack is made to say in the same play, ''because my own is made lighter thereby.'' And, sure enough, they made blunders, plenty of them! But the manager of the company—who was our stage-director—merely smiled to himself, as much as to say, ''Now you can see for yourselves that acting is not child's play.''

We slunk home through the most deserted streets; and yet this had only been a rehearsal.

The next morning, even before sunrise, we three had our names on the bill-board at the street corner and on the walls of the village-inn.

Though scarcely awake I "did" my part. To my infinite satisfaction it went as easy as the Lord's prayer. Besides, we had the entire day for practice, and master had not got any sewing ready for me. I think he had none in the house at the time. We actors addressed each other in the course of the day, only by our new titles: Baron, Moor, Corporal.

They tell of a priest who, wishing to perfect himself in the art of preaching, went out into his garden patch to discourse on repentance and the forgiveness of sins to the cabbage heads. We, too, fared forth into the woods and practiced our parts; the trees were our auditors, and they did us the favor not to run away. Yes, even better; they waved their arms in applause. Only, after my lines, it seemed to me that the pines and the larches shook their heads, and whispered to each other, disapprovingly. "Those blockheads are a stupid lot, or else, professional critics!" an actor from the city would have said. Indignant, I went toward the village. My long artist-locks were waving in the breeze, and I rejoiced thereat.

Our village doctor was not satisfied with my carriage; I did not stand straight nor soldier-like enough to suit him. He pushed my chest out and my stomach in, my knees back and my chin up. He let me stand thus in the garden for a while, alongside of an aged tree trunk; while we, the straightened tailor and the trunk, ogled each other.

Evening approached. The village had talked of nothing but the event, that is, the great play, "in which three of the most talented men in the country round about were to take part." The troupe looked forward to a full house; already, in the afternoon, the tickets were on sale.

I was broken in spirit. Slowly I took my way out into the fields. There being no end to my inner torture I rushed toward a patch of turnips, pulled one and ate it.

This act revived my self-confidence; with my arms crossed I sauntered over field and meadow, into a glorious future.

The sun had gone down. It was a beautiful evening. I skipped along, blissful and free, as on the day when I was excused from military service. I cast loving glances at the evening sky, my heart was full of new feelings and presentiments; here and there a flower was still in bloom; and thus—let me confess it with downcast eye and blushing cheek—I wrote a poem that evening.

Then I heard a sound as of the whetting of a scythe. The weaver's daughter was mowing the evening ration for her cow. Yes, the same weaver-maiden, who was now seventeen and whom one of my poems had declared to be woven of lilies and rosemary.

I now was an artist, an actor; a comedy was to be enacted then and there.

I stepped up to the weaver-maiden: ''Good evening, Juliana!''

''Same to you,'' she answered. She did not look at me at all, but kept on mowing with exemplary diligence.

''Juliana, I want to tell you something.''

''There's no need of it.'' She mowed and mowed and then put the grass into a big basket.

''Juliana,'' I implored.

''Go, don't bother me; I must go to my cow.''

Then, full of tragic pathos, I exclaimed: ''You only care for your cow, you scorn a loving heart.''

''Yes,'' she said and worked on.

''Very well,'' I said, ''then I shall go away and go on the stage!''

''Go right along!''

''I shall go on the stage, yes, go into the wide world and proclaim my woes on the stage and weep behind the curtains till my heart breaks, and I shall kill myself with a gleaming dagger, and I shall return no more!"

"Won't I cry, though?" mocked the maiden.

"No more! Yes, and I shall take up with vagabonds and beg for a living or, else, I shall not eat another bite and die. And so I shall rove around and go to the bad and run after all sorts of folks, men and women, and become a good-for-nothing."

"What, a good-for-nothing you'll become?" Juliana snapped at me. "You had better stay at home, and if you are bound not to like your trade, then learn weaving of my father!"

She had turned half around and the rake was about to slip out of her hand. The clock on the village-church struck. "Eight o'clock, already!" I cried. "For Heaven's sake, Juliana, I've missed my appointment!"

Then I left her and ran toward the village. I was to appear in the first scene and was not yet "made up." According to the announcement on the bill-board the play was to begin at seven. I raced across the fields and along the village street, and what I had feared came true—I arrived in time.

"*Bonjour, monsieur, bonjour!*" George bawled at me, "*venez ici, venez ici!*"

"Yes, yes, yes, yes!"

"*Où êtes-vous resté si longtemps?*"

"The devil take you! I was with—at the rehearsal!" I snapped at him; then I was provoked at my stupid excuse, the untruth of which was so perfectly evident.

I now had time to throw myself into my stage clothes, but so little was I drawn to the whole performance that to withdraw entirely would have been more of a drawing card for me, as I suggested in grim humor.

"Hurry up, gentlemen, hurry!" urged the director, "the audience is getting impatient." However, he let us have another whole half-quarter of an hour and, finally, we were ready. As for my costume, it presented an international aspect. Thus I waited the approach of the dread moment. An eagerness to throw myself into the fray seized me; I was on the point of rushing out upon the stage, sabre drawn, but the blade stuck to its old love, the scabbard, thus effectually disproving the old adage that "Old love never rusts."

The overture, rendered on the schoolmaster's fiddle, had died away.

"Are we ready?" the prompter asked.

"We are."

A signal. The curtain rose slowly and with a tremulous motion. Heavens! the whole loft was crowded, as far as the eye could reach and the light of the four candles could shed its lustre.

"Go on, Corporal, go on!" the director said to me under his breath.

In a trice I was on the stage and my first words: "Surely it is not the tall gawk that works for the farmer," fell dolefully from my lips.

But just then, when I had got through with the "tall gawk," I noticed, sitting there upon a beam—the weaver's daughter.

"Are you crazy?" the prompter hissed at me. "Can you not repeat a single word I say?"

But I heard nothing, I saw nothing more; I staggered toward the rear of the stage, and the curtain fell.

"*Pauvre ami!*" George cried and caught me in his arms.

"For heaven's sake, do not leave me in the lurch!" the director wailed.

"I? in the lurch? Who? whom?" I asked confusedly, and then I answered defiantly: "Certainly I shall play."

The curtain rose again; I played my part. I played! I was enraptured at my playing. My voice reëchoed from the rafters and I stamped with my heavy boots—Hungarian-make—so that the whole house rang. Thus I, standing erect and straight, and bawling out my words in true soldier fashion, ran back and forth on the stage and when the "gawk" would not obey me, I stamped my foot angrily on the floor—then suddenly the rotten boards gave way and I fell into the sheep pen underneath.

The most perfect stage machinery in the world could not produce such surprising effects as did these worm-eaten boards. The audience thought at first that this strange mishap was a part of the performance, until the director, completely crushed, announced that the piece could not go on.

The gentle sheep in their pen had jumped in every direction when I so suddenly came from above. I lay upon the straw, and above me I heard a voice:

"*Dieu, Dieu! Où est donc notre ami?*"

"No performance has ever fallen through so completely, since plays have been staged!" the prompter exclaimed pathetically.

Then the door to the sheep-pen opened. "Did you hurt yourself?"

'Twas Juliana.

"Good Heavens, I don't know!" I said; then she laughed.

"Don't laugh, Juliana," I begged of her; then she laughed still more. And when they heard her laughing, upstairs, they scattered quietly.

"Push that bolt," I whispered, "I do not want them all to come in and make fun of me."

But thank Heaven, I had fallen on the soft straw.

I have to relate that the sheep and lambs at first bounded from one corner to another, but they finally became quieted and gamboled and played with each other.

The theatre troupe did not refund the money they had taken in; they left the village. People would often go to the hayloft of the inn and examine the hole in the floor. And I went and later wrote this account in a mood which, I trust, my reader will pardon.

ROBINSON IN THE TAILOR-COT

My master, Natz, lived in a little cabin on the heights, where the farmsteads end and the mountain-pastures begin. They called it "The Hermitage" because of its lonely location, although, since we occupied it, it was better known as "The Tailor's-cot." Weekdays I occupied my seat there, only when there was some "homework" to attend to; my master, on the other hand, spent many days and nights by himself in his lonely cabin. It had been strongly built, the doors could be locked securely, the windows were small, and barred besides. In fact, there was little danger of anyone breaking in. It was in this place that, a few weeks after entering upon my apprenticeship, I had an experience which I shall not soon forget.

One Monday morning my master had asked me to come up to the cabin. I had more than an hour's walk from my home to the place. However, I arrived in good time and we got ourselves ready for a journey into the Mürztal, where we had an engagement for some weeks.

In the Mürztal we tradesmen from the uplands were always in great demand, because we worked cheaper and were less exacting in our "keep" than were the professionals from the lowlands. These, naturally, always sneered at us, when we trotted past to snatch their customers from under their very noses.

I always looked forward to our trips to the Mürztal, we fared so well there, the way thither was so beautiful, and all was so new and strange.

Owing to our prospective long absence we put away and locked up everything that we did not need to take with us. When this had been attended to, my master poured some water on the still glowing coals, on which he had cooked his breakfast, so that there might not be any danger of fire. Then he wound the clock—it was a fourteen-day clock. If the thief, listening, hears the ticking of the clock, he is apt to think that someone is in the house and will refrain from breaking in.

Before my master closed the shutters he said to me: "Just go straight ahead, it will be dark in here presently; step right along, I'll overtake you." I knew well enough that he wanted to commend his belongings, which he left here at the edge of the forest, to the protection of the saints and especially to his name's-sake, St. Ignatius. He also sprinkled holy water on door and window, so as to have done all a good Christian can do for the protection of his possessions. While thus engaged he always wished to be alone; I, therefore, took myself off and hastened to get an iron-tipped yard-stick, from a chamber in a back room. I also found a "tailor's goose" there, which, it seemed to me, was less inconvenient to carry than the heavy iron-block which I usually lugged from house to house, and with which I could press the thick woolens better into shape, although, by using it, I exposed myself to the derision of people.

As I stumbled through the dark rooms, down the few steps to the front door, with my newly discovered utensils, I found it—locked; yes, locked, bolted, and barred and the house vacant, my master gone and myself imprisoned.

Instantly I raised a loud cry; I was frightened at my own voice, reëchoing through the house and imprisoned like myself. My master did not appear; he had gone. He could not but believe that I had gone ahead. As a matter of course there was a mad jolting and tugging at the door and, likewise as a matter of course, the door would not open. I pushed back one of the shutters and shouted: "Master, master, I am still in here! I cannot follow you, do you not see?" He did not hear me; it must be that he was already off over the hill.

Far down in the basin-shaped valley, one could see the farmhouses with their brown thatched roofs. They looked like mole-hills. One could also see the white outlines of the church at Sankt Kathrein shimmering through the larches and the birches. You may scream as much as you please, tailor-lad, your voice is even lighter than you are yourself; it cannot reach down into the valley, it will vanish in mid-air. How my master will race and pant through the forest and say to himself: "Well, I declare! I always considered myself a good walker, but there's no overtaking this young fellow, when he gets started—he has such very long legs!"

On our last trip to the Mürztal I had rushed ahead in order to have my scissors sharpened over there in Langenwang, before going to our customers.

"What's the need of this eternal scissor-sharpening, anyway?" master will think to-day, and he will hasten his steps and run like a pursued wild goat, while the apprentice sits in the tailor-cot, unable to get out.

What's to be done now?

Break out? If I only knew how! The door is fastened securely, the windows closely barred. Through the chimney? Slender though a tailor may be, he is not slender enough to escape through a chimney. Therefore there's nothing to do but wait patiently till the master returns.

I opened all the shutters so that it was light, at least, in my prison. I walked from one chamber to another, racking my brains—it is said that the brain is mighty and rules the world—to find some means of escape. I found none. Ordinarily, clever enough ideas originated in the head of this apprentice, so that people often thought him crazy. But to-day I seemed to have no other alternative than to run this same head against a wall in an effort to effect an opening.

I was horribly lonely in my prison. They say that stillness cannot be stiller than still. But when you sit imprisoned in a hermitage-cabin, and hear nothing but the tick-tack-tick-tack of the clock as it takes its slow steps to eternity, and when the ticking is so monotonous that, finally, you cannot hear even that—then stillness is stiller than still.

The clock at last struck the noon-hour. My master did not return. Another voice, however, became suddenly audible—my stomach inquired politely: "What about soup and dumplings to-day?"

Then I began a search through the house. All the chests and boxes were locked, and when I found the keys and opened the receptacles, they were empty. Fearing that during his long absence the food might spoil, my master had eaten as much as possible, and had carried the rest over to a neighbor so that she might use it and repay it later with fresh provisions. I found a large piece of bread in one of the chests, but it was so aged that it had a venerable beard. Furthermore, I discovered, in a paper-bag, a little rice.

Now in order to cook rice fire and water are necessary. This proposition must be classed with those eternal verities, to question which is pure arrogance. Outside, ten steps from the cot, the spring was purling.

I rummaged through every nook and corner for means to start a fire. Fire is the best and most friendly companion to one in my situation, and the smoke rising above the cabin might attract some passer-by and bring me deliverance. I found a few letters from women, addressed to my dear master Natz, in which they had sought to set his heart aflame. Nor was any other kindling material to be found. No flint, no tinder, no match. I kept up my search, and was not at all pleased when I discovered my master's most secret treasures tucked away in a little box under the tiling, in a most innocent looking corner behind the stove. They consisted of a few coins, the value of which I knew, but also of faded, dried-up roses and locks of hair, the value of which I did not know.

"I should not be surprised," I thought to myself, "when he finds out how I have rummaged around among his things, if he put me in the lockup! But God and hunger are my witnesses that I have only been looking for means to make a fire!"

Then I noticed a phosphorescent something on the floor, in a dark corner, near the stove. My master had the habit of using matches as tooth-picks, after he had broken off their heads. Now, it was such a head, disjointed from its body, that lay there, shining with a pale, bluish lustre, a single, tiny bit of fire, still encased, cold and unavailing, yet bearing deliverance within, if I should succeed in arousing and taking care of it. Since I could not find a whole match, I tried my fortune with this head by rubbing it as best I could upon the hearth-stone. But: ''Many heads, many minds,'' and this time mine did not have its way. However ready I was with a paper-lighter in my left hand, and however much I pinched and rubbed the bit of phosphorus with my right, it remained cold and irresponsive. I seized it with a needle-forceps to rub it on the hearth-stone—then, with a flash, it flew against the wall and burnt itself out before I could light my paper-spill. And with that the star of my hope was extinct.

In one of the chest-drawers I found my master's pistol, which he was in the habit of shooting off so that people of all ranks and conditions in life might know that we had firearms in the house. I found it loaded to the muzzle. Yes, my boy, fire enough in that barrel! And such fire! But—if I keep it imprisoned, it will do me no good; if I set it free, it will flash up and be gone! A luckless situation.

In the afternoon it began to rain. I held a pan out at the window, for I was thirsty. But the few drops that fell into it did not avail. Then I went to the attic where, after a great deal of trouble and effort, I succeeded in pushing one of the shingles aside so that some water trickled in. I put my pan under the opening and thus got some water. Almost at the same time I discovered a few eggs on the straw on which the journeymen slept whenever we had helpers. Who had put those eggs there, I wonder? Within the memory of man there had been no chickens about the place. ''My master must have brought these eggs and put them there for safe-keeping," was the only reasonable conclusion.

Well, I sucked them and ate a piece of the venerable bread. Then I felt the pangs of remorse: "Why man, here you are, idling away your time eating the master's provisions while he works himself to death over in the Mürztal." Now I looked around for something to do in return for my meal. There was some cloth in the drawer, but nothing that had been cut out ready for sewing. Then I looked through my master's wardrobe to see whether I could not discover in some of his trousers holes too many or buttons too few. All I found was a somewhat dubious-looking elbow; otherwise everything was in good condition. Not finding any occasion to be of service, I began to split wood in the kitchen. And under the big sticks of wood I found a house-key.

I leaped with joy, leaped as high as one of my profession can possibly leap. But how vain are the joys of this world! The door had a puzzle-lock, which, as I saw, could be locked with a key, only from the outside. I began to howl and laugh with rage. Water within a few feet of me, and yet I suffered thirst; wood and fire within reach, and I was freezing; I held the key in my hand and was—imprisoned. Foiled and rebuffed at every turn!

Evening came on. Down in the valley lay the houses of Hauenstein, a misty veil overhanging them. Not a soul came toward my hermitage, why should they? People knew the tailor-cot was forsaken, and its inhabitants gone over to the Mürztal. Nor did my master come. He was over there in the Mürztal, indulging in profanity at my expense: "What can have become of the young man?—Dash him, anyway! He's always wanting to see more of the world; I should not be surprised if he had gone for good, the thoughtless rascal!" How could the man know what iron patriotism made me stay at home?

Finally I crept into my master's bed.

I slept soundly; my dreams, too, were pleasant enough.

I felt someone near me, to whom I said aloud: "Now I do not care that we are locked in:

"What do I care for people
When at my side you are?
We are two happy beings,
Imprisoned though we are."

Any rhymes will pass muster in our dreams, seemingly. But the awakening was all the more disagreeable. I had been roused by a noise in the wall. I listened; there was a knocking and digging and boring outside. Burglars! Are they attempting to get through the wall? Do they want to break through the foundation and crawl through to steal my master's belongings? If so, I shall revive an old custom, shall stand before that hole, as did the miller's daughter and decapitate the robbers one by one, as they come out. Then the old proverb about tailor-courage will have to be recast. I would gladly have gone to the kitchen to fetch the axe with which I had been splitting wood the day before, but I dared not leave the bed. If, at least, I could arrange matters so that, while the robbers busied themselves with chests and boxes, I could slip out through the hole they had made! I would then quickly barricade this main entrance, entrap the malefactors, and be free! Now I ventured out of my bed and tip-toed over to the window. Someone was actually standing near the corner of the house, and the knocking and pounding continued.

"In God's name, then—I will guard the house of my master! As for my life, I'll sell it dearly!" With this thought in mind, stealing noiselessly about, I got the axe and pistol ready. Hastily I donned a few clothes, and murmured the little prayer which the Church has provided for awakening repentance and contrition. I determined fully to mend my ways, if possible, if I should come out of this alive and I made up my mind not to have such very worldly dreams hereafter; then I carefully opened the little window.

There the fellow stood and looked straight at me. "Who the devil is out there?" I thundered. Such language in the middle of the night, here in the hermitage! It sounded awful.

"Rascal, I'll shoot you down!" I yelled again, and pulled the trigger . . .

The noise which I had attributed to the activity of the burglar continued; he himself was still standing there, as audaciously as ever. But the flash of my gun had revealed the identity of the culprit. There was the God-forsaken wretch near the fence—an old tree-trunk that, immodestly enough, had nothing but his tattered bark hanging about him even in day-time, and out of whose every crack decaying matter trickled down. "The audacity of his undertaking to frighten folks in the dead of night! I settled him for good this time, he will not frighten me again."

When I regained my courage I looked out of the window and caught sight of the burglars. The wind, which had come up to drive away the rain, was beating hard upon some boards that were leaning against the house, slamming them this way and that, so that they rattled and creaked and moaned.

To have arrived at a just estimate of your enemy is half the victory. I closed the window and went to sleep again.

The next morning the sun shone scandalously bright and lovely.

"If no one comes to-day I shall not stand for consequences," I said threateningly. "A person wants something warm in his stomach."

Then I saw a man coming along the footpath toward the cabin. At last! I got the key ready so that I might hand it out through the window and ask the passer-by to unlock the confounded door and release me. But when the man approached, I jerked my head back, hurling imprecations against the walls, such as probably have never been hurled, either before or since.

'Twas Gori, the sallow journeyman cobbler—my mortal enemy. Our strained relations were really unjustifiable. There would have been room for both of us if we had lived peaceably with one another, and on the basis of good-natured give-and-take; as much room, indeed, as falls to the lot of any cobbler or tailor here below. But we had the same conception of mundane things, we looked upon one and the same maiden as being the most beautiful and lovely in the whole empire. Thus, only last Sunday, when the beloved being was at the village inn with her father and I was about to take a seat at a table close by, Gori came up quickly and said: "This place can't hold both of us." The eighteen-year-old tailor's apprentice had no show with the twenty-five-year-old cobbler, and before I realized the situation, I found myself outside. But it was a satisfaction to me that, at the same time, the object of our affections left the inn with her father, "because of this disgraceful rowing."

Thus matters stood between me and the sallow-faced journeyman cobbler, who just then passed the hermitage. Puffing away at his porcelain pipe—its bowl had a female figure on it—he slowly trudged past the window, with a load of lasts on his back. I would not accept freedom at his hands if I had to stay imprisoned until my beard should reach nine times around the stove!

This little incident had warmed me up considerably, but all too soon time again dragged heavily. There were some books and some paper; ordinarily I was very fond of reading and writing. But, imprisoned as I was, I did not feel disposed to engage in literary labors. The genuine jailbird may be reconciled to his lot; he knows that the keeper will bring the soup at noon or, if he fails at noon, he will bring it for supper.

At noon I saw a beggar outside, sunning himself. If I hand him the key he will certainly be obliging enough to open the door. Would you have taken your chances with him? Would you not have considered it high treason against my master if I had given away the secret of his puzzle-lock to a stranger, perhaps a thief? No! measures so extreme were not yet called for. "If the vagabond stays a few minutes longer on the grass—which he very likely will, seeing that he is busying himself with something or other, —then all is well." I hurriedly wrote a note: "Will you please send some one up here? The tailor is locked in and cannot get out." I folded the paper, sealed it, then called out through the window: "Hey, there!"

The tramp jumped up and, seeing that the house was occupied, he began at once to beg. I handed him a four-kreutzer piece—money was a worthless commodity in my prison! "But you must be kind enough," I said, "to take this little note down to the farmhouse, where there is a wash-boiler standing outside. Give it to the woman there; it's a little message, and I haven't time to run down."

The man very obligingly took my signal of distress down to the valley where people enjoyed the blessings of social intercourse and abundance, yet failed to appreciate these great gifts.

Hour after hour passed, yet no one came. I rummaged once more through all the places where my master might have any provisions and lunched on pepper and salt—a diet which I had scorned the day before. As evening approached I became frantic. I shook the door furiously, I tried to break through the roof. In vain! The joke was getting serious.

"Tailor!" I heard some one shouting outside. I made a leap to the window. Well, here was a pretty mess.

Mariechen, the daughter of the farmer, was standing outside.

"I am to unlock the door, am I?" she asked.

"Be so kind, lassie; here is the key. Master locked me in without meaning to."

"You in there?" she exclaimed. "We were thinking it was your master; mother sent me up because she thought it was he that was locked in. We got the note this afternoon, but we were in the fields and did not have time. If I had known it was you, I would not have come up even now."

"Have you anything against me?" I asked uneasily.

"Not at all! You know well enough, why."

"You always act so uppish toward me!"

"I uppish toward you? You had better act differently toward me."

"I should like to know what you mean by that?"

"What right have you to disgrace me before folks?" she said, and brought her apron up to her face to hush her sobs.

"For Heaven's sake, Marie, what is the trouble? How do I disgrace you before people? Come here, come to the window and tell me, how do I disgrace you?"

Instead of coming nearer she retreated a few steps. Her light, soft hair hung loose, her young bosom heaved like the billowy sea. I was so excited that I sought to force my way out between the bars.

"Well," she said, "isn't it a disgrace when you write poetry about me, and when you say that I am so fine and good-looking and must be your sweetheart, and foolish stuff like that? And then you let people read it and make me ashamed enough to sink through the floor."

This was a blow for me!

"Mariechen," I said finally, "I wish you would come a bit nearer. Open the door and come in. You surely will not be offended if a body says that you are pretty!"

"If you have to set that down in black and white for people, so they will believe it, it's bad enough."

"But see, dearie, one likes to talk about it."

"If you have anything to say, you dummy, you know where to find me. What business is it of others that you like me?"

I set the above down for the instruction of those poets who think they have done enough and more than enough when they sing the praises of their fair ones. "You know where to find me," Mariechen said.

"Just come in and we'll settle this," I coaxed, stretching out my arms. "But you must unlock the door—here is the key."

She burst into a merry laugh—laughed even though vexed to tears. "I shall take good care not to let you get out to-day. Hungry as a bear, as you are, no one would be safe!"

"Do you want me to starve? Am I nothing at all to you?"

"If you're not a stupid! If the key fits from the outside, it surely will fit from the inside, try it once."

"I have already tried. It's a puzzle-lock."

"It's your own fault if you don't know how to manage it. Don't you find a push-spring on the lock?"

"Yes, but that holds the bolt."

"Just press on that spring, then turn the key—then come out."

I had great difficulty to get my head and arm out of the barred window; she watched me roguishly enough to make me say to myself: "This is going better than I thought it would."

Then I tried once more to manipulate the lock, this time according to her directions and—the door stood open!

It stood wide open and before me lay freedom and the evening sky and the maiden ran off as fast as she could—away, away!

What else is there to say? When I returned from my hot pursuit, I set the house in order and locked the door with scrupulous care, having first assured myself that no one was inside.

Then I hastened home.

"How does this come?" mother said, "are you not over in the Mürztal?"

"I should like something to eat," was my only answer.

"I haven't any wheat-cakes for you to-day," she said, "and that is all I can get you to eat."

"Anything will do."

So I ate, and then I slept, and the next day I went over into the Mürztal and looked for my master. He growled and laughed; but I told him only half of the torments of Tantalus which I had suffered in my prison.

KARL SCHÖNHERR

By Hermann J. Weber, Ph.D.
Associate Professor of German at the University of California

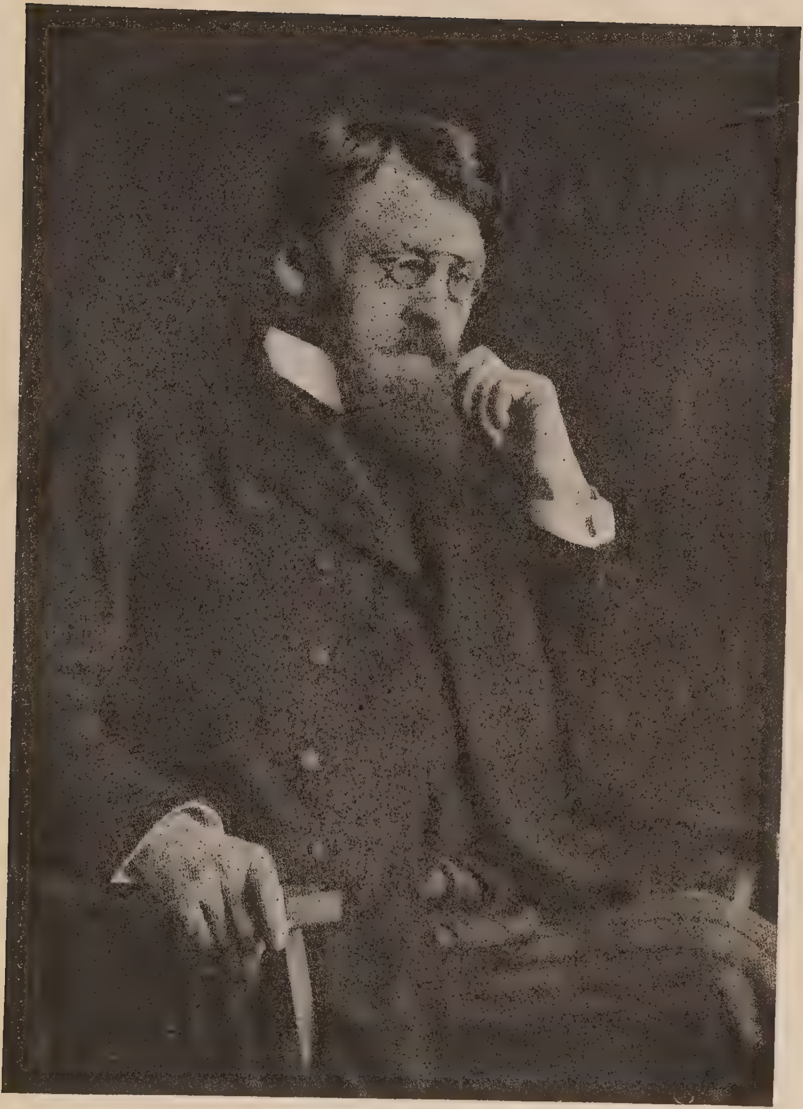
NOTHING could better illustrate the wide range of present day German literature in Austria than the fact that the drama is represented by such diametrically opposite writers as Hofmannsthal and Schönherr. Hofmannsthal is primarily a Renaissance poet, drawing his inspiration and style from the great works of the past, a believer in Art for Art's sake, presenting the experiences of the elect for the elect; he is the modern representative of the delicate refinement and the ancient culture of Vienna.

Schönherr (born in 1868), on the other hand, draws his inspiration from the mountains of his native Tyrol; there is no more nor less art in his works than in these mountains themselves; he presents the experiences and, preferably, the sufferings of the poor in spirit, addressing himself to every one who has a warm heart. Jeremias Gotthelf, Anzengruber, and Rosegger are his literary forbears, but he is not dogmatical and biased, as the former two are inclined to be, nor sentimental, as the latter. We can liken him best to the painter Leibl. His characters in their inflexibility and particularly in their grim humor remind us sometimes of those in the epics of Germanic antiquity. We can imagine Gerhart Hauptmann as not having come out at all as a Naturalist, if Naturalism had not been the watchword of his youthful days, but we simply cannot conceive Schönherr as being anything but a Naturalist, even had he lived in the most artificial period of literature. To him Naturalism is not a literary creed, but the expression of his personality. Schönherr, the foremost representative in the contemporary German drama of *Heimatskunst*, by which is meant a class of literature which, following the Naturalistic School and based on modern sociological ideas, tries to picture all the indigenous peculiarities of the people of the poet's *Heimat*. Schönherr exhibits to an unusually large degree the excellencies and shortcomings of this class of literature; he is thoroughly familiar with the people of the Austrian Alps whom he pictures in their rural surroundings, he does not try to contrast country life with city life as the older generation of writers was so fond of doing, his characters are wondrously lifelike, the very product of their native soil; but, on the other hand, they cannot rise above this soil, they share in the limitations of Nature, and do not enjoy the higher freedom of Art. Schönherr has more renown as a dramatic poet, but it is in dramatic art that these limitations show themselves most clearly, since in the drama, in spite of the maxims of professed Naturalism, it does not suffice to create characters true to Nature but these characters must exert their wills in opposition to one another, and, in Tragedy, must themselves bring about situations the inevitableness of which must reconcile us to their bitterness and thus lead us to inner freedom and peace. All this is not given to Schönherr; he moves us deeply by the sorrows and sufferings which his characters undergo, but he cannot show us a way out of such sufferings nor make us accept them with humble hearts.

Schönherr's career as a dramatist is marked by the following plays: *The Woodcarvers* (1900), *Mother Earth* (1907), and *Faith and Fireside* (1910).

Schönherr calls *The Woodcarvers* a tragedy of good honest people. It is a play in one act, more properly a dramatic sketch, showing merely a pregnant situation, but exhibiting evidence of excellent characterization. Friedl Sonnleitner, a poor Tyrolese woodcarver, lies sick in bed with blood-poisoning; he and his family would have to starve but for the help of his friend and fellow worker, Gebhart Perathoner. Gebhart's father, however, a sly and egoistic old man, foreshadowing Grutz in *Mother Earth,* complains that his son will no longer allow him two florins a week for his support, but that he gives everything to Friedl's family. He has his eyes sharpened by greed and jealousy and sees what his son had not even seen himself — that it is not the love for Friedl and his children which makes Gebhart give up all his earnings to Friedl's wife, but the love for this wife herself. And she, although always having been loyal to her husband, unable to bear that Gebhart is abused by his father for her sake and in her presence, is thereby suddenly made to comprehend what Gebhart has been to her, and, overcome by grief and happiness, sinks into his arms. Friedl having witnessed this scene, unnoticed by his wife and Gebhart, now refuses to have the operation upon his hand performed, which alone could have saved his life. He commits his wife and children to Gebhart's care, and heroically makes ready to die. We hear in the distance the bells of the sleigh of the surgeon whom Friedl has sent away. A leaden sky of hopeless gloom shuts down on these doubly poor people. Well could Kienzl write in a review of this play in the *Grazer Tagblatt* in 1901: "This Tyrolese writer will yet be heard from. In his one-act-tragedy there is a greater fulness of life than in many a successful drama in five acts."

Mother Earth, a play in three acts, Schönherr calls "A comedy of life;" a comedy it certainly is not, if we take this word in its usual meaning as signifying a play presenting a futile conflict. There is no real conflict in this play at all, for the characters, as is the rule with Schönherr, are passive, but the poet has placed them in a situation of such a grotesque, and occasionally gruesome, humor that we may well imagine ourselves breathing the air of true Tragicomedy. In Grutz, Schönherr has created a character which is not only his best but also one of the most remarkable of recent naturalistic German literature; a worthy counterpart of Frau Wolff in Gerhart Hauptmann's com-



KARL SCHÖNHERR

edy *The Beaver Coat*, and of Mudder Mews in Stavenhazen's tragedy of like name. This Grutz, an old peasant, who lives in a secluded Alpine valley, is so fond of active life and enjoys such a stupendous vitality that there seems but little hope for his only son Hannes to get the homestead and thus to be able to marry and have children of his own. As much as ten years ago Grutz had refused to give up the homestead when Hannes wanted to marry Trine. Hannes thought at first of going away, but the love for the homestead held him fast; he simply could not go—"that a man cannot do, and does not do," as he puts it. In the meanwhile his hair has grown gray, he has lost all his energy as a result of the hopeless waiting, and has thereby only encouraged his father in the belief that he will never make a worthy successor for him. Hannes has long given up caring for Trine, and Mena, the present housekeeper, has cast her eye upon him. Suddenly the whole situation is changed, for Grutz is kicked by a vicious horse. He prepares for the end; he sends for the carpenter who is to take his measure for a coffin, and has the coffin placed by his bedside after having bought two lots in the graveyard as a preventive against being obliged to lie beside a man who had cheated him in the sale of a cow. Hannes' hopes seem at last on the point of being fulfilled, when, quite unexpectedly, Grutz recovers. He calmly chops up the coffin as firewood, and Mena in disgust marries "Das Eishofbäuerlein," a widower with three children, who lives way up in the mountains next to the glaciers, but who has, after all, a farm of his own. Hannes remains a servant of his father's on the homestead. Mother Earth controls the fate of all men and presses them tightly to her bosom. Such is Schönherr's treatment of the old *Kein Hüsung* theme.

This longing of the country folk for a homestead and their determination to hold it after it has once been won, furnish Schönherr with one of the great contending forces in his "tragedy of a people," *Faith and Fireside.* By showing his characters in the frightful necessity of having to choose between their love of home and their attachment to religious creed, Schönherr presents them in a truly tragic conflict, which rests on fundamental instincts of the German peasants. Schönherr has, with good reason, avoided idealizing this love of home, and shows it in its primitive materialism; he has succeeded incidentally thereby in deepening the conflict to one of general human significance, and making it the conflict between man's love for material possessions an his desire to reach out into the Great Unknown. It is this feature, after all, which has given to *Faith and Fireside* such an important position in contemporary German literature, and which assures to it permanent value. Schönherr came first to be known to the public at large by this play, which is rightly considered his masterpiece, although the critical reader will not fail to observe that *Mother Earth* surpasses it in the clear outlines of its characters and in the purity of its style. The experiences of the Protestants of Salzburg, who were expatriated on account of their faith, from the end of the sixteenth down to the beginning of the eighteenth century, as is well-known, furnished the substratum of Goethe's *Hermann and Dorothea*, Goethe substituting the refugees of his own time for the Protestant exiles of the earlier period. But few readers of Goethe's idyllic epic, who happen to be conversant with the original source, will ever have stopped to consider what sacrifices the Salzburg exiles made in order to remain loyal to their faith. Enrica v. Handel-Mazzetti alone can be mentioned as having brought out vividly in her novels the terrible times of the Counter-reformation, as Schönherr has done in his drama. Schönherr shows here the love of home, not only from the tragic and pathetic side in the struggles of the Rott family who profess their Protestant faith, and of Sandperger who retracts, but also, with his usual grim humor, in the case of Englbauer who buys up the homesteads of the exiles so that every one of his nine sons may have a farm of his own, and, finally, by adding a light touch to the sombre picture in the characters of the youthful couple of vagrants, who cheerfully join the exiles in the hope of getting in foreign parts a tiny home for their future offspring.

While Schönherr has thus presented the love of home in a purely naturalistic style, he unfortunately has succumbed to the temptation of highly idealizing the great conflicting force of religion. He has impaired thereby not only the homogeneity of style, but also the dramatic qualities of the play, for the principal characters are Christian martyrs rather than men with human passions. When Rott's wife says to her husband, as he holds out a forgiving hand to the Trooper who is responsible for the death of their only child: "Christof, you are altogether above a man," and the Trooper, who, taken by himself, is surely a tragic character, overcome by this manifestation of the true Christian spirit, breaks his sword to pieces in a somewhat symbolic fashion, we cannot help thinking of the famous words of Lessing, who asks: "Is the character of the true Christian not entirely unfit for the stage? Do not his quiet submission and his invariable meekness, which are his essential characteristics, conflict with the whole object of tragedy, which tries to purge passions by passions?" On the other hand, nothing short of sheer bigotry, worthy of Lessing's Patriarch, could ever have seen in this play an attack upon the Catholic Church, while, as a matter of fact, it is absolutely free of all polemics and a thoroughly impartial presentation of the time of the Counter-reformation, the horrors of which are rather subdued than exaggerated.

It is not very likely that Schönherr will outdo this masterpiece of his and write plays which will avoid the fundamental defect of his dramatic art, which is the absence of impetus in his characters; these are, after all, in spite of the dramatic situations in which they appear, undramatic. When, again, Schönherr has tried to leave his literary province and has ventured into the realm of pure imagination, as he did in his *Märchendrama*, *The Kingdom* (1908), his hand has proved too heavy, and the results have been even more unsatisfactory than in the case of Sudermann's *The Three Egret Plumes.* Schönherr, in short, lacks the pinions that will carry a poet to the stars. Mother Earth gives him his great strength, but in return she holds him her bondsman. Schönherr's recent play, *The People of Trenkwald* (1913), a comedy in five acts, based on his *Midsummer Day* of 1902, is disappointing. Schönherr has evidently realized his inability to present a purely spiritual conflict, such as he had attempted to do in the character of a very young theological student in his earlier play, and is contented to expose the selfish motives that sometimes are the main source of offerings for religious purposes, but the characters are not forceful, nor the play as a whole convincing or even interesting.

The collection of short stories, entitled *From My Notebook* (1911), gave rise to hopes that Schönherr might possibly show a further development in the field of narrative art. To be sure, *My Old Priest in the Mountains* is merely a brilliant portrait, but in *The Herdsman* and in *When Father Died* we possess scenes of life in which the bitter and the sweet are so finely blended as to dismiss us with hope and peace. On the other hand, we have in *The Guard of Honor* a brief story of rollicking humor, such as we had not met before in Schönherr, and in *Brawlers* a sketch in which the pugnacious instinct of the Tyrolese peasants is seen to rise to monumental grandeur.

Schönherr's latest volume of short stories, however, *A Ledger* (1914), shows a painful paucity and crudity of motives, and his fame must rest after all for the present on his attainments in the drama.

KARL SCHÖNHERR

FAITH AND FIRESIDE

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

Christopher Rott	*a farmer*
Peter Rott	*his brother*
Old-Rott	*his father*
Mrs. Rott	
"Cock-Sparrow,"	*his son*
Mrs. Rott's Mother	
Sandperger	*a farmer of Leithen*
Mrs. Sandperger	
Unteregger	*a farmer*
Englbauer	*a farmer*
An Imperial Trooper	
The Clerk of the Court	
The Country Barber and Doctor	
The Cobbler	
Tinker-Wolf Roving-Molly	*A pair of youthful vagrants*
A Soldier	
A Drummer	

At the time of the Counter-Reformation in the Austrian Alps.

FAITH AND FIRESIDE (1910)

TRANSLATED BY EDMUND VON MACH, PH.D.

ACT I

A Room in Rott's *house. In the slanting left wall two windows; in the left corner a bench about a brick oven. On the level with the edge of the oven a projecting wall-cabinet, and on it an ornamental glass vase. Entrance door in the centre of rear wall. In right hand corner a table with chairs and a bench. There is a "Holy Corner" with many pictures of saints. In the foreground, right, a door leading to another room. The day is waning.*

Mrs. Rott *in the chimney corner, spinning.* Old-Rott *in an old armchair set on wheels, near the table; his back to the audience, propped up with pillows.* Barber *busy about* Old-Rott.

Old-Rott. Barber, my skin's tight as a drum!

Barber (*nods*). I don't doubt it, Old-Rott. 'Tis the dropsy! You'll feel better soon now, I've just tapped you.

Old-Rott. Make me get rid of the water that I may breathe again.

Barber. It has begun to flow. Keep still.

[*There is a knock at the door.*]

Mrs. Rott. Come-in, whoever's Catholic!

Unteregger *enters, greatly excited.*

Unteregger. Good evening, sister-in-law!

Mrs. Rott (*looking at him with displeasure*). Whoever's Catholic, I said. Heretics may stay outside!

Unteregger. So it is! God's Word undefiled is called heresy! Hallowed be Thy name! and they are the first to disgrace it. The hangmen are busy "in God's name," and in the Virgin's name the wild Trooper is riding afield, driving us together like winded hares. (*Groaning.*) Day after tomorrow has been set!

BARBER (*nodding assent*). Yes, indeed, my dear Unteregger, turn Catholic or leave the country; that's the order.

UNTEREGGER (*nods in painful emotion and reverentially touches his hat*). Yes! our most gracious lord and emperor will no longer suffer us Lutherans.

MRS. ROTT (*spinning*). Forswear! Then you may stay.

UNTEREGGER. I can't do it. My conscience is a much stricter master than even pope or emperor—

MRS. ROTT. 'Tis a pity about your soul!

UNTEREGGER (*drawing close to her and humbly begging, in great depression*). Sister! I am bearing a double misery. I'll have to leave, and your sister, my wife, won't come along, not with a heretic, she says.

BARBER. You should be glad to be rid of her and her biting tongue! Barely three weeks ago she broke a plate on your head. I sewed you up.

UNTEREGGER. 'Tis true. There are the scars! She is worse than a chained dog! (*Coming nearer.*) But, don't you see, Barber? If I have to move—God pity me, I can't take the country with me on my back, nor my old paneled room in which I have lived since I can think. And so 'twould be a mighty consolation. (*Bursting out tearfully.*) I shouldn't mind two or three plates every day, if only I have something with me to remind me of home in distant lands! (*Approaches again* ROTT'S *wife.*) Please, speak for me with your sister!

MRS. ROTT (*abruptly*). You won't find her when you go home. My mother has come to get her. By now they are beyond that mountain.

UNTEREGGER. Oh, that's the tune? Well, then my cup is full! God have mercy on me.

[*Exit by entrance door.*]

BARBER. Just one moment, Old-Rott, we'll be through presently.

OLD-ROTT. I'm in no haste; I can't escape death.

Barber (*to himself*). Well, well . . . when two faiths fall ascuffling — 'tis fierce!

Old-Rott (*reminiscing to himself*). When I was six years old . . . I saw the two faiths scuffle . . . (*shuddering*) the wheel, the gallows and arson; today I am eighty-two — and they are still fighting.

Rott, *a big burly farmer, enters through the centre, in shirt sleeves.*

Mrs. Rott. Christopher, is that you?

Rott. Yes, and honestly tired too!

[*Sits down, wiping his forehead.*]

Mrs. Rott. Everything all right in the fields?

Rott. Yes! — where the soldiers are not riding across them. Soon we'll see and hear nothing but galloping horses and clanging swords! —

Barber (*busy about* Old-Rott). The wild Trooper is spreading blood and fire!

Mrs. Rott. Day after tomorrow the last column will have to go. Then there'll be rest.

Rott (*thoughtfully*). So 't is. The Lutheran farmers will have to go, to the last man.

Cock-Sparrow, *a bright lusty, hotheaded boy, about twelve years of age, enters with a bundle of twigs from the right.*

Cock-Sparrow. Mother, where is the cup of birdlime?

Mrs. Rott. Way up on the oven.

[Cock-Sparrow *mounts the bench, and after dipping one twig after another in the birdlime, he places them on the cabinet near the glass vase.*]

Mrs. Rott (*to* Rott). It has been raining a whole week. Now it is clearing. How about the barley?

Rott. We'll cart it in tomorrow; else it would rot. Every one will have to help in the fields. You too, Cock-Sparrow.

Cock-Sparrow (*on the bench without stopping his work*). Can't do it. Tomorrow I'll have to help John Gstöttner catch birds. I promised him, sure.

Mrs. Rott (*angrily*). You'll go to the fields to carry sheaves!

Cock-Sparrow. To catch birds! I promised John Gstöttner—

Mrs. Rott (*shouting*). To carry sheaves!

Cock-Sparrow (*in sudden temper, still standing on the bench, reaches for the vase and hurls it to the floor*). To catch birds!

[*The vase breaks into pieces; a dollar rolls on the floor.*]

Barber (*laughing*). He's a thoroughbred!

Mrs. Rott (*very angrily*). What? The Emperor's gold-piece?

Rott (*flaring up*). Is your hot head on fire again?

Mrs. Rott. I'll put it out all right—with a hazel-stick.

[Cock-Sparrow *has stepped down from the bench.*]

Rott (*in a conciliatory tone to his wife*). Well, well! If he gave his promise, he'll have to keep it. (To Cock-Sparrow.) Don't wait here, run away!

Cock-Sparrow (*remains where he is*). Well? You'd better strike me! I deserve it.

Mrs. Rott (*who had approached the boy with the stick in her raised hand, drops it*). When you talk like that, I won't hurt you! (*Puts the stick down, after a pause, sadly.*) But what will become of you with your stubbornness? Tell me that!

Cock-Sparrow (*shrugging his shoulder. After a pause*). That's the way I am!

[*Leaves the room through the centre door, thoughtfully and as if ashamed.*]

Rott (*shrugging his shoulders*). He's a Rott after all.

Old-Rott (*who is attended by the* Barber). We were all like that when we were young.

Mrs. Rott. Life with you Rotts is never free from care, neither day nor night. One never knows whether the next moment the fire isn't going to blaze up through the roof. (*She quickly gathers up the fragments of *the vase, kneeling on the floor.)* Everything must go to ruin. Even his Emperor's gold-piece he knocks to the floor.

BARBER (*who has finished*). All right, my dear old friend! (*Pushes a wooden bucket on the floor to one side with his foot.*) I have done.

ROTT. Father, can you breathe better now?

OLD-ROTT. Yes, but for how long!

BARBER. That's right, the water will gather again, and no herbs are grown to cure old age or dropsy.

OLD-ROTT (*calmly*). No one can live forever. (*Has risen. addressing the* BARBER.) How long will this clock keep on going? (*The* BARBER *tries to avoid a reply.*) Tell me. I want to know.

BARBER. Until the water rises to the heart. Then get ready for your last breath.

OLD-ROTT. And when will this happen? Tell me. I want to know.

BARBER. The exact day I cannot tell. I give you, let's say—two more weeks.

OLD-ROTT (*nods calmly*). Two weeks! That's good. (*Draws the* BARBER *quite close, pulling him by his sleeve.*) Barber, before the last breath is due, you'll have to tell me clearly. (*Gives him his hand, solemnly.*) There, shake hands on that. There is something I have to attend to before then (*looks at his son firmly and meaningly*)—something of importance.

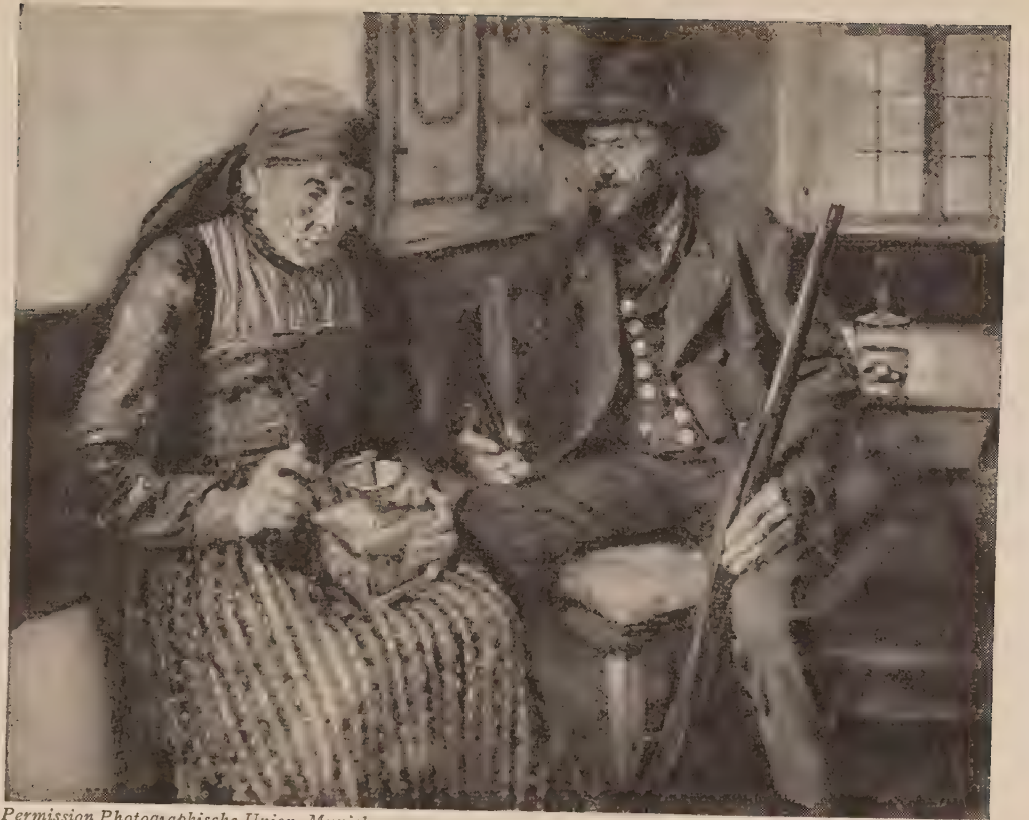
BARBER (*shakes his hand, reassuringly*). I'll tell you. You may count on it.

[OLD-ROTT *sits down on the bench, puts his hands on his cane, and is lost in thought.*]

BARBER. The invalid's chair I'm going to remove, lest you think of dying all the time.

[ROTT *stands lost in thought.*]

MRS. ROTT (*has gathered and removed all the fragments, picks up the gold-piece, and regards it*). This gold-piece needs cleaning. (*Places it on the window-sill.*)



Permission Photographische Union, Munich

Wilhelm Leibl

PEASANT HUNTER AT AN INN

Mrs. Rott. You're house-greedy. Haven't you enough yet?

Englbauer (*heatedly*). Enough? For every boy one farm! That's my maxim.

Mrs. Rott. How many boys have you?

Englbauer. Eight.

Rott. And how many farms?

Englbauer. Sandperger's would be the ninth.

Mrs. Rott. Then you have already one farm too many!

Englbauer (*annoyed*). What do you mean by "One too many?" Another boy is coming — is already on the way. Didn't you hear what the Barber said? In a day or two he'll be here (*getting more and more excited*) and then I must have a farm for him.

Mrs. Rott. You had better buy him a baby bottle. He won't need a farm as soon as he gets here.

Englbauer (*vehemently*). But he must have land of his own when he arrives. No child of mine shall come into this world a vagabond. That's the way I treated the other eight, that's my maxim. I am the Englbauer!

Rott (*to* Englbauer). I saw smoke today from the direction of your farm when I was in the fields.

Englbauer. The wild Trooper is scorching and burning.

Rott. They say he once wore the cowl, and belonged to the wealthy nobility.

Englbauer. I only know that today he swings his sword and all the Lutheran peasants' heads are dancing to his music.

Mrs. Rott. As they have brewed, so must they drink. Those heretics!

Rott (*reprovingly*). Wife, you shouldn't talk like that. Faith is a gift from God.

Mrs. Rott. That's what your brother also said when they tried to make him again a Catholic.

Rott (*thoughtfully studying the distance*). Where may he be now? Peter had to move among the very first.

OLD-ROTT (*nodding*). Fully half a year ago. (*Points with his stick to the door.*) There, to those door jams he clung with his whole might when the soldiers came to get him.

MRS. ROTT. But he wouldn't forswear. The traitor!

[*It is growing dark.*]

ENGLBAUER. Rott, let's have a light. I will count the money for Sandperger.

[*Sits down at the table. While he is waiting for the light, he is drumming on the table with his fingers.* ROTT *goes to light up.* PETER ROTT *has stepped into the room. Completely exhausted, stops at the door.*]

MRS. ROTT (*in the dark*). There is a stranger. (*Going up to him.*) Who are you? [*There is no reply.*]

ROTT (*lighting a pine torch and sticking it up on the wall. To the stranger*). Can't you speak?

[*The room grows light.*]

[PETER *remains silent by the door of the lighted room. Emaciated, rags on his sore feet, exhausted with hunger and long tramping.*]

ROTT (*looking at him closely*). Man! How you look?

MRS. ROTT (*in gradual recognition.*) This is—Christopher!—Your brother.

OLD-ROTT (*rising*). What—Peter? (*Staring at his son.*) You are back?

PETER. Yes, father, here I am.

OLD-ROTT. Then you have forsworn?

PETER (*shaking his head*). I can't do it. Faith rests with God.

OLD-ROTT (*frightened, recoils*). What? Secretly returned? That means a severe penalty.

PETER (*nods assent*). I could not bear it among strangers in a foreign land. I hid by day, and traveled by night—long weary hours—hunger and thirst; no soles on my shoes! Father, hide me! Give me something to eat, to live on!

OLD-ROTT (*recoils in vehement remonstrance, frightened*). "Whoever offers food to a returned Lutheran, or hides him and does not drive him away, will be exiled." That's the order.

PETER. Father, hide me in the hay! I'll live in the barn or the shed, if only I am at home!

OLD-ROTT (*has withdrawn into the farthest corner with his fingers in his ears, in great fear*). Shall I, too, have to leave here, an old man of eighty-two? (*Turning to* ENGLBAUER *and to* MRS. ROTT.) Englbauer! Daughter! You are my witnesses. I gave him no hand, no food, no hiding-place. I drove him away — as the order says.

PETER. God keep you — father!

[*Leaves by the entrance door.*]

ROTT (*greatly moved*). Father, you are hard with Peter.

OLD-ROTT (*in tears*). God be my witness that I would gladly help him. It is not I who is hard, it is the order. (*In despair.*) Did I issue it?

ENGLBAUER *seated at the table counting the money and arranging it in piles. While* SANDPERGER *and his wife enter.*

MRS. ROTT (*noticing them, much annoyed, to herself*). 'Tis a regular reception-day. There are two more Lutherans! [*Remains at a distance.*]

ROTT. God bless you, Sandpergers!

SANDPERGER. Same to you, neighbor! (*Hands* ROTT *a big chain.*) This cow-chain is yours. I thank you for having loaned it to me — I have no further use for it.

ROTT (*accepts the chain; sympathetically*). Ready for the trip so soon?

SANDPERGER (*looking at his wife*). We shouldn't be in much of a hurry, if it depended on us, should we, mother?

MRS. SANDPERGER (*carries in one hand a big basket covered with a cloth, and in the other two potted plants, in rather poor condition*). One must make a virtue of necessity.

SANDPERGER (*bravely*). So it is! Wednesday is the day of blood. The butcher has just fetched our cow — oh yes, she was a fine milker; ten quarts every day, and sometimes twelve. Isn't that so, mother? And she never kicked, nor kept her milk back. As she was led off, she turned back to look at us fully twenty times — our cow — and she mooed at us. Isn't that so, mother?

MRS. SANDPERGER (*to* MRS. ROTT, *pointing to the basket*). Neighbor! Here, take these two hens!

[*She cannot hide her deep emotion.*]

MRS. ROTT (*to herself*). Lutheran hens in my yard. (*Loud.*) I need no hens!

MRS. SANDPERGER. Two such laying hens — neighbor, I tell you! They begin at Candlemas and keep it up till deep into the winter. No eggs lost, but all properly laid in the nests!

MRS. ROTT. I am not buying hens!

MRS. SANDPERGER. Nor should I give them for money. I'm making you a present of them, because they would have a good home with you, and they deserve it.

MRS. ROTT (*roughly*). I want no presents — of hens.

ROTT (*with a disapproving look at his wife, takes the basket, and gives his hand to* MRS. SANDPERGER). God reward you, neighbor! The hens will be looked after.

MRS. ROTT (*with a laugh of vexation*). Have you suddenly turned chicken farmer?

MRS. SANDPERGER (*bespeaking* ROTT'S *care for her two potted plants*). Neighbor, please take also these fuchsia and rosemary plants. I've tended them like children. The fuchsia almost froze last winter, and the rosemary wanted to grow crooked. How pleased I was when I made it grow straight after all. But one cannot take such things along, however fond one is of them. One has to give them away.

ROTT (*touched, takes the plants and places them on the window-sill. After a pause*). Whither are you going?

MRS. SANDPERGER (*with conviction*). Where our heavenly Father leads.

SANDPERGER (*bitterly*). The wild Trooper and his soldiers will show the way, never fear!

MRS. SANDPERGER (*with fervor*). Let him do what he will. My Bible I'll not forsake.

ENGLBAUER (*has finished counting the money, arranging the coins in rolls on the table*). There! — Now come along, Sandy! There's the money, every penny, just as we've agreed. Count it and take it.

SANDPERGER (*without moving, almost hostile and repellant*). Time enough. Today's only Monday.

ENGLBAUER (*angrily*). And on Wednesday you'll have to go.—And then he says: Time enough!

MRS. SANDPERGER (*urging her husband*). Do conclude the bargain now! (*After a pause.*) He has delayed thus from day to day for six weeks.

SANDPERGER (*addressing his wife*). How long did you delay with your hens? My fields in Leithen are more worth than your rosemary plants and your two hens! (*In praise of his fields.*) Two bushels I seeded down and some forty odd I harvested. The Leithen field always gave a splendid yield . . .

ENGLBAUER (*angrily*). And every spring it was washed out. Then you had to carry the good earth back again in buckets up over the hills.

SANDPERGER. That's so. But after that the field did yield! Listen, Englbauer (*admiringly*), two bushels of seed yielded a harvest of fully forty —

ENGLBAUER (*wishing to press upon him a coin to bind the bargain*). And now the field is yielding money! Count it and take it.

MRS. SANDPERGER (*with energy*). Tomorrow we'll have something else to do. To pack the beds, to have the shoes tapped — to call for the passports at the courthouse —

SANDPERGER (*bitterly*). Listen, neighbor! We must have a passport. They expel us, but we have to ask permission, politely, to be expelled! (*Growing more and more sorrowful.*) As if one would be going of one's own accord — as if one could no longer stand it on one's own beloved farm . . .

MRS. SANDPERGER. Don't talk so much. Follow where your faith leads you.

SANDPERGER. Yes. The Bible consoles the hearts of the poor, we used to say, when we sat down at home to our simple soup, after the work was done, dead tired and sore. Then we took our Bible and found consolation in thinking of a better world. Our hope was in God's pure word and the gospel. (*Bitterly.*) There you've got it now: the comfort of the Bible!

ENGLBAUER (*urging* SANDPERGER *up to the table and the money*). Never mind your comfort! Count the money and take it.

SANDPERGER (*freeing himself angrily without looking at the money*). Get away! Today's only Monday. Tonight I'll sleep once more a farmer; for the last time a farmer, on my very own farm!

ENGLBAUER (*greatly annoyed*). Cursed fool! You'll keep me off till the child is here before the bargain's struck.

MRS. SANDPERGER (*to* ENGLBAUER). If he has not concluded the bargain before sunset, I'll do it.

ENGLBAUER. I'll trust in you. (*Pockets his money. To himself.*) He may be here tomorrow, the Barber said (*angrily*), and by then I must have a farm. No child of mine shall come into this world a vagabond!

[*Leaves by centre door.*]

MRS. ROTT (*moved in spite of herself*). Tell me, neighbor. You're bearing and suffering so much — for a wrong faith?

MRS. SANDPERGER. Neighbor, if each one follows his conscience, the clock will keep correct time!

[*Leaves by centre door.*]

[ROTT *thoughtfully steps to the window and looks out.*]

MRS. ROTT. Now I'll shoo out the Lutheran hens lest mine get the pip. [*Leaves by centre door, with the basket.*]

ROTT (*to himself in much perplexity*). "If each one follows his conscience . . . !"

[*When he finds himself alone, he listens a moment, then bolts the door and carefully draws the curtains. After that he raises a loose board of the floor and takes a metal-studded Bible and prayer-book from its hiding place. He sits down under the torch, opens the book with his clumsy hands, and begins to read.*]

"Silver tested by fire seven times is found pure. Thus also God's Word will be tested by the cross and by suffering. Then its strength will be revealed and it will shine over the lands."

[*Stops, and sighs, much embarrassed.*]

OLD-ROTT (*appears in the door on the right, leaning on his cane. When he sees himself alone with his son, he glances fearfully toward the entrance door.*) Is it bolted?

[*When* ROTT *nods assent over the book, he comes up and sits down by his son.*]

ROTT (*reading*). "The Lord does not treat us according to our sins; for as high as the heaven is above the earth, so He lets his grace rest on those (*hesitates*) . . . who confess Him and . . . stand by Him. (*More and more hesitatingly.*) But the hypocrites and the cowards do not stand the test, for they fall like worm-eaten apples. (*An anguished pause.*) How long will you limp on both feet? (*Much worried and hesitating.*) For those that are neither cold nor hot I will spue out, says the Lord God." (*In anguish, glancing up at his father.*) So it is, father. God will have nothing to do with those either who carry their cloak on both shoulders.

Old-Rott (*groaning and wiping the sweat of anguish from his forehead*). Christopher, read on! Read till there comes a word of comfort. Some comfort!

Rott (*reading*). "For truly I say unto you, whosoever confesses me before men him will I also confess before my heavenly Father, but those who deny me" . . . (*Pushes the Bible slightly away, and anxiously to his father.*) There is no comfort. Confess, confess! So it goes from page to page. (*After a pause.*) Father we have recognized the true gospel there (*points to his heart*)—but we do not dare to say so.

Old-Rott (*groaning and wiping the sweat of anguish from his face*). Wait a while! I'll dare—sometime. Everything will be all right.

Rott. Everybody about us is standing the test. All are bearing and suffering. Peter, the Sandpergers, Unteregger—all are doing as they must. Only we two, afraid of leaving our home and farm, are acting against our conscience. (*In great woe.*) And yet there is no rest till this here (*points to his breast*) receives its due.

Old-Rott. Ere the water mounts to my heart; the Barber will give me a special warning! Then—when my last hour is approaching, when I know that they cannot tear me alive from my home—then I, too, will do as I must. Ere I draw my last breath, I shall surely say what I feel, I shall cry it out loud, "I, too, am one of them, an evangelical follower of Christ."

Rott. Indeed, cry it out loud, if then you still can cry. (*Dissatisfied and in remonstrance.*) "If" and "but" and "but" and "if!" Our neighbor's wife says: "Don't talk so much, follow where your faith leads."

Old-Rott (*with a flash of temper*). It's easy enough for all of you to talk. You are in the prime of life, and can build your nests anew in foreign lands. But I—I have heard the swish of the sickle—on a cart they'd have to carry me off, and in the first churchyard beyond the boundary I shall have to lie. (*In wild grief.*) In foreign lands; among strangers! And when I shall rise on the judgment day, I'll stand there alone, nobody 'll know me, all will be looking at me saying, "How did he get here? How did it happen, he had no home?" (*In shame and sorrow and violent remonstrance.*) In shame I should have to descend again into my grave: (*Vehemently.*) No! Here I'll stay, here I'll rest, where the Rotts are at home: father and grandfather and before them their fathers, back for five hundred years.

ROTT (*noisily closes the Bible, and hits the cover with his clenched fist. In great anguish.*) Woe to us farmers! That we cannot make our own faith! Our heads are hard, we can straighten out and explain nothing! We are ever befogged and cannot find the way . . .!

[*In despair knocks with his head against the table. Pause. One hears a galloping horse approaching rapidly.*]

ROTT (*raises his head and listens.*) The wild Trooper!

OLD-ROTT. He'll be looking for our neighbor.

ROTT (*jumping up hastily*). No! He's stopping here. (*To his father.*) Father, quick, go into the chamber. Don't let him see you.

OLD-ROTT (*moving off.*) They're ruling our souls with the lance and the sabre.

[ROTT *quickly hides his Bible in the floor, replaces the board and stamps it into place. Loud knocking and shaking of the entrance door.*]

ROTT. A fierce storm is at the door. (*Unbolts the door.*)

THE TROOPER (*rushes in wildly through the door which he leaves open behind him. Scratches and scars on his face, reeking with blood and sweat*). God's martyr! Behind locked doors!

ROTT (*straightening his clothes, quietly*). I am about to change my working clothes. Why should door and windows stand wide open?

[*Quietly opens the curtains.* MRS. ROTT, *and a little later* COCK-SPARROW *have appeared in the door, frightened.*]

THE TROOPER. Let's have your Lutheran Bible! Dog!

ROTT (*looks about the room, quietly*). Have you a dog with you, sir?

THE TROOPER. With dogs I will chase you and kill you. Give me your Bible (*ready to draw his sword*) or I'll cut a bloody rag from your body.

MRS. ROTT (*entering*). We have no such Bible, sir.

THE TROOPER (*examining a list which he takes from his pocket*). The fourth house.

MRS. ROTT. You are in the third.

THE TROOPER (*reading in the list*). Sandperger!

ROTT. I sign: Christopher Rott.

MRS. ROTT (*pointing through the window*). Sandperger lives next to us up the road. Here we are all of the proper faith, master and servants alike!

THE TROOPER (*has looked about the room, and when he has seen the many pictures of saints in the holy corner, has grown calmer*). All right. I can see now for myself that I am in a Catholic house. The Lutherans won't tolerate the saints. [*Drops into a chair, as if suddenly overcome by dizziness.*] A drink of water!

MRS. ROTT. I'll get it for you.

[*Goes off through the entrance door with the water pitcher.*]

THE TROOPER (*tired, sitting in evident exhaustion, with his eyes fixed on one particular sacred picture*). You in particular the brood refuses to respect, Holy Virgin, mother of grace!

ROTT (*standing to one side, examining the* TROOPER). There are red spots all over you.

THE TROOPER (*looking down on himself for a moment, while a shudder passes through him. After a pause*). I well believe it. Three days and three nights I have not had my uniform or my boots off, riding through blood all the time, striking and thrusting!

MRS. ROTT (*entering with the pitcher which she offers to the* TROOPER). God's blessing go with it!

THE TROOPER (*drinking greedily. After a pause he jumps up, tears open the window, and leaning far out, yells*). Hello! Soldiers! Up the road the fourth house! Blood hound, ferret about in kitchen and cellar, in chimney, pantry and attic. Get busy! (*As he draws back from the window he inadvertently brushes the gold-piece from the windowsill with his sleeve. The gold-piece rolls janglingly to the floor. Thinking that the gold-piece had dropped from his pocket.*) The devil! Is there a hole in my pocket? Do the gold-pieces roll from my clothes?

[*Stoops to pick the gold-piece up.*]

[COCK-SPARROW, *who until now has stood in the open door, quickly jumps into the room, and reaching the gold-piece ahead of the trooper snatches it from him.*]

COCK-SPARROW. Not on your life, Mr. Gray-beard.

[*Seeks refuge with his father.*]

THE TROOPER (*laughing*). A devil of a wild cat!

ROTT (*playing with his boy's hair*). He's only a wild cock-sparrow, sir.

THE TROOPER. Come here, young sparrow-brood.

COCK-SPARROW (*seeking protection behind his father*). I don't want to.

MRS. ROTT (*making eager excuses*). You ought to know, this gold-piece is no ordinary coin. One day some very fine hunters came riding past here in great haste, and in front of them one on a white horse — a really fine one. (*Pointing to her son.*) He — little hop o' my thumb, stood in the middle of the narrow road and would not budge. The whole cavalcade had to stop.

THE TROOPER (*laughing*). The little fighting cock!

ROTT (*proudly playing with son's hair*). Only a cock-sparrow, sir.

MRS. ROTT (*continuing*). "Why don't you give way?" the very noble hunter asked him. "Because I wish to ride. Get down and let me sit on your horse." And the hunter really dismounted, lifted the little fellow into the saddle and gave him a ride. Afterward he gave him a gold-piece and asked for his name. He (*pointing to her son*) replied: "My father calls me 'Cock-Sparrow.' What does your father call you, man of the white horse?" Then all the gentlemen burst out laughing, shaking in their saddles, and we still heard them laughing long after they had passed. Didn't we, Christopher?

THE TROOPER (*laughing and regarding* COCK-SPARROW *with approval*). The little fighting-cock!

MRS. ROTT (*slowly and reverentially*). And do you know who the man of the white horse was? We learned it afterward.

THE TROOPER. Well! Who was he?

MRS. ROTT (*so awed that she cannot find the right word, to* ROTT). You tell him.

ROTT (*reverentially touching his cap*). Our most gracious Lord and Emperor!

[*The* TROOPER *gives a pleased laugh.*]

ROTT (*not without pride*). Yes. On account of such a stubborn boy the Emperor himself had to dismount.

THE TROOPER (*to* COCK-SPARROW). You're the Devil's own. You may have a ride also on my black horse. He's standing at the door.

COCK-SPARROW. I don't want to.

THE TROOPER. Why not?

COCK-SPARROW. You are no emperor.

[*Leaves by centre door.*]

THE TROOPER. Nothing less than an emperor will do. (*To* ROTT.) How many have you of that breed?

MRS. ROTT. Only this one.

ROTT (*proudly*). He is the bull in my stable. He'll have to continue the farmer family of the Rotts.

THE TROOPER. 'Tis no mean breed. (*Noise is heard near by, he rushes to the window as if electrified.*) Hello! my dogs have bagged their prey.

[*Leaves quickly by centre door.* MRS. ROTT *rushes to the window to look out.* ROTT, *deeply moved, does not stir.*]

MRS. ROTT (*hastily jumping back into the room away from the window*). Christopher! Mrs. Sandperger! Hell is let loose down there. The Trooper will take her Bible, she won't let it go. Christopher, look!

ROTT (*angrily, without looking up*). You may look. It does not divert me when good people are martyred.

MRS. ROTT (*astonished at his tone, talking from the window*). What ails you?

ROTT. Nothing.

[*A short pause.* MRS. SANDPERGER *rushed in, deadly pale, seeking a refuge. She holds her Bible with both hands, eagerly pressing it to a bleeding wound in her breast.*]

ROTT (*after looking at her, frightened*). Neighbor, you're bleeding.

MRS. SANDPERGER. Let it bleed. I won't let go my Bible.

[*Falls to the floor, convulsively gripping her Bible.*]

SANDPERGER (*rushes in*). The Trooper has struck her.

[*Going up to his wife.*]

MRS. SANDPERGER. Once again, Trooper, strike! I won't let go my Bible! [*She lies motionless.*]

SANDPERGER (*kneeling by her side*). Wife! (*Shakes her*). Are you dying?

MRS. SANDPERGER (*partly rises, supporting herself on one hand. The other hand is convulsively clutched about

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PEASANT WOMEN IN CHURCH

the Bible). Don't talk much — and — follow — where your faith leads. [*Falls back, dead.*]

SANDPERGER. 'Tis finished! (*With cutting bitterness*). There it is, the comfort of the Bible!

[*The* TROOPER *rushes in with drawn sword.*]

ROTT (*to the* TROOPER). Put away your knife. She needs no more.

MRS. ROTT (*pointing to the floor*). There, sir — blood!

THE TROOPER (*looks a moment upon the spots of blood on the floor, then slowly sheathes his sword. He suddenly shuffles his feet violently over the spots. Addressing* MRS. ROTT). Woman! tear up your floor. The blood of a heretic is the devil's fertilizer. Six new ones grow from it. [*Moves quickly up to the dead woman and tries to snatch the Bible from her convulsed fingers.*] Let me have your Bible, you witch of the devil! Devil yourself! I can't tear open your claws.

ROTT (*heaving with an inner tumult*). Such peasants, sir, have grips of iron, haven't they? (*Suddenly as if he had reached a decision, he goes up to the* TROOPER, *pushing him aside*). Let me try. Perhaps I may grip it! (*Kneeling by the dead, in inner exultation tries to open her fingers*). How now, neighbor? Let go, don't you hear? (*Tries in vain.*) By God, woman, you are strong. (*Trembling with emotion and giving good words to the dead as to an obstinate child*). Give in — give in, neighbor. (*Growing more and more urgent.*) Let's have your Bible. With me it is in good hands —

[*Has wrested the Bible from the convulsed fingers; rises.* OLD-ROTT *appears in the door on the right, leaning on his cane.*]

ROTT (*with inner warmth*). Blood, sir, is a good thing. Blood makes strong. "Six new ones grow from it." (*Puts the blood-stained Bible on the table, and places his fingers on it ready to swear*). Before God and men

I confess myself loud and openly to the unchanged confession of Augsburg. . . .

MRS. ROTT (*in an agonized cry*). Christopher!

ROTT. To the pure gospel and unadulterated word of God. And in it I will remain, so help me God! (*With a sigh of relief.*) There! Now it's done!

THE TROOPER. Oh, does the devil of heresy put out another horn? I'll knock it off.

ROTT (*facing the* TROOPER). You little man. Here I am. Do with me as you wish.

THE TROOPER. I'll grind you down, you and all your peasant friends!

OLD-ROTT (*has noticed the dead; walks up to her, and shuddering at old reminiscences*). When I was six years old, I saw the two faiths scuffle. . . .

THE TROOPER (*shaking* OLD-ROTT). You too, old man, are you of the same mind?

OLD-ROTT (*recovering, much frightened*). I? What do you mean? I am all right, Captain.

THE TROOPER (*presses the hilt of his sword to the temple of* OLD-ROTT *and looking deep into his eyes*). You have a wily, cunning look.

OLD-ROTT (*retires to the chamber door remonstrating, full of fear*). Oh no, Captain, I'm all right! I'm all right.

THE TROOPER (*to* ROTT). Day after tomorrow is house cleaning. I'll chase you like a mangy dog from house and home.

MRS. ROTT (*in tears*). Now we are in misery: Water cannot flow up hill.

THE TROOPER (*to* ROTT). You will yet yield. Tomorrow I'll have a new order read.

ROTT. What order?

THE TROOPER. Christopher Rott! I'll give you a load to carry which will break you. [*Leaves by centre door.*]

ROTT. I have a strong back, and my God will help me.

ACT II

ROTT'S *farmyard. Midday sunshine. Left front, a huge old cherry-tree surrounded by a bench. Further back, at an angle with the stage, the rather stately farmhouse. A few steps lead to a brick porch in front of the entrance door. Stables and barn to the right. In the centre, at an angle a large granite watering trough with a large round pillar of granite in which there are two iron pipes to conduct the water. The upper part of the pillar is hollowed out in the shape of a niche in which a sacred painted panel [S. Mary with the child] is clearly visible, with an oil lamp in a red globe before it. At right and left there are entrances to the courtyard. A third entrance, for vehicles, is imagined to lead over a wooden bridge disappearing slantingly in the centre. The bridge spans the mill-stream, flowing from right to left at the back of the farmyard, and connects with the highroad, the broad windings of which appear in the distance. The background reveals a fine, open, distant view.*

COBBLER *seated before the house, nails a pair of shoes. Listening. Horses galloping up and down. The wild* TROOPER *is spreading blood and arson. The quick sound of drums is heard wafted over by the wind from a great distance.* COBBLER *listens.*

THE CLERK OF THE COURT *with a leather bag slung over his shoulder, enters at right.*

CLERK. In this house a new recruit has been added to the band of exiles since yesterday.

COBBLER. What was the meaning of the drums, Clerk?

CLERK. A proclamation is being read from house to house. (*Arranges a place for himself by the trough where he can write, and takes paper, several lists, ink, and some quills from his bag. To the* COBBLER.) Are you nailing Rott's traveling shoes?

COBBLER (*nailing with vehemence*). Yes. On these Lutheran shoes I'm spoiling all my nails. [*While the* CLERK *is arranging his papers.*] Is it going to be a good drove?

CLERK (*glancing at his list*). Two hundred and twelve are on the list for tomorrow. Add Rott and you'll have (*writing*) thirteen. (*After a pause.*) Good Lord, an unlucky number. There'll be a bad end.

MRS. ROTT (*comes from the house, with a pair of shoes in her hand. She shows signs of weeping and descends *the steps visibly troubled. To the* COBBLER). There I want a cap, and here on the side put a patch.

COBBLER (*looking at the shoes*). A cap in front, a patch on the side. (*Throws them on the pile of shoes in front of him, and goes on nailing.*)

CLERK (*writing*). Mrs. Rott, how old is Christopher? (*When she looks at him in surprise.*) I mean — on account of the passport.

MRS. ROTT (*very low in her mind*). In his forty-third year.

CLERK. In his prime!

COCK-SPARROW *with a horseshoe enters from the left.*

MRS. ROTT. Where are you coming from?

COCK-SPARROW. Three hours' walking from the Alps. I've been climbing about on the highest trees.

MRS. ROTT. You can't sit still.

COCK-SPARROW. No.

MRS. ROTT. Don't climb any more trees. I have often told you, and now I'm telling you for the last time.

COCK-SPARROW. There are soldiers in front of Sandperger's house.

MRS. ROTT. What are they doing?

COCK-SPARROW. Knocking on the door with the butts of their guns. But nobody is opening it.

MRS. ROTT. He is not at home.

COBBLER. And she cannot rise from her deathbed.

MRS. ROTT (*noticing the horseshoe*). What have you got there?

COCK-SPARROW. The wild Trooper's black horse cast it at the cross-roads. He flew along so fast that all the stones sparked fire.

CLERK. Keep the iron, Cock-Sparrow; 't may bring you luck. (*With a meaning.*) You'll need it.

COCK-SPARROW (*laughing*). The iron?

CLERK. No, the luck.

COCK-SPARROW. Why? I'm happy.

MRS. ROTT (*bitterly*). Things are looking very happy with us. The Englbauer is here just now to buy our farm.

COBBLER (*angrily*). That house-greedy fellow is about wherever a farm is on the market.

UNTEREGGER (*rushing in, as if driven by some one; to* MRS. ROTT). Sister, tomorrow is the day!

MRS. ROTT. I know; then what are you doing here?

UNTEREGGER. Nothing. Fear is driving me 'round and 'round like a mouse in a tub of water. Tomorrow is the day!

CLERK. Unteregger, have you your passport?

UNTEREGGER (*reaching to his breast pocket*). Yes, and no. (*Bursting out as he leaves.*) Two or three plates every day! I shouldn't mind. If only I had something with me to remind me of home in distant lands!

[*Leaves by the left.*]

MRS. ROTT'S *mother enters across the bridge, limping, a rosary of huge beads in her hand.* ROTT, *who has stepped out on the porch unnoticed, hears the following conversation.*

MRS. ROTT (*astonished*). Mother, you here again? and with your lame foot! Coming down the mountain twice, yesterday and today?

MOTHER. Lame foot or not! I have nice sons-in-law. Yesterday I came to get one daughter, and today to get you. In these troubled times the brood hen wants to have her chickens by her. (*Urgently and anxiously.*) Have you finished packing? Or come along as you are, that we may be together. I'll protect you, nor let harm come nigh you, either in body or soul!

MRS. ROTT (*with conviction*). Mother, I am not my sister. Where Christopher goes, there I go too. He and I and Cock-Sparrow, we are a team of three that cannot be parted.

MOTHER. This is your very last word?

MRS. ROTT. Mother, you know me. I have said it, and that is final.

[MOTHER *suppresses a tear, turns quickly to leave.*]

MRS. ROTT. But, mother, you'll rest awhile and have a plate of soup. (*Overcome.*) We are cooking here for the last time today.

MOTHER (*anxiously and in haste*). No rest for me. I'll go home! If I have lost one chicken, I must keep the other the warmer in these wicked times. [*Leaves.*]

CLERK. Mrs. Rott, then I may write your passport, too, right now? (*Rubs his right wrist.*) The devil! I'm really getting sore from writing so many passports. (*Goes on writing.*)

[ROTT *has come down the steps.*]

MRS. ROTT (*noticing him, angrily*). But I tell you, I won't go along. You may go alone to destruction. As you've brewed, so may you drink!

ROTT (*gladly, much touched*). Dear wife, I've heard what you told your mother. (*Takes her hands, warmly.*) God reward you. You are often prickly on the outside, but on the inside you are good.

MRS. ROTT (*bursting into tears*). Oh, my Christopher, why have you brought us to so much misery?

[*Turns away and leans against the railing of the porch.*]

ROTT (*in agony*). Why, why? I don't know why! I can't help doing what I must. The tree puts out leaves because it must.

[OLD-ROTT *arrives slowly, leaning on his stick, and sits down heavily on the bench by the tree.*]

CLERK. Old-Rott, have you been out walking?

OLD-ROTT. Yes, to the graveyard.

COBBLER. Rott, how will you have these shoes mended? (ROTT *steps to his side.*) Shall I put a double row of spikes here in front?

ROTT. What do you mean?

COBBLER. The highway eats up leather soles as if they were made of paper. [*A pause.*] On the heels a bit of iron? The road is long, you know.

ROTT. Do as you please. (*Studies the distance thoughtfully. Again the quick beat of a drum is heard in the* *distance.* ROTT *listening.*) What kind of drumming is that? It begins and then stops again right away.

CLERK. They are reading the proclamation.

ROTT. What proclamation?

CLERK (*secretly moved, in remonstrance*). You'll find out soon enough when they come to you.

OLD-ROTT. Christopher, tomorrow it is!

ROTT. Yes, father, yes. Tomorrow we'll have to leave. (*Pause.*) But what will become of you?

OLD-ROTT (*in remonstrance*). Don't worry about me. Here I shall wait to my last breath. Here I will lie.

ENGLBAUER (*with walking stick and knapsack enters from the barn at the right, examining everything carefully as he proceeds. Stopping before* ROTT). Well, I will say, stable and sheds, corn-cribs and utensils, everything is in good order.

OLD-ROTT (*proudly*). Yes, the Rotts have always given good care of everything. The carved corn-cribs alone have stood in their places two hundred years.

ENGLBAUER (*annoyed*). You need not be boastful! Other people too have carved corn-cribs. (*To* ROTT.) The barley is still in the fields, in sheaves, ready to be carted in?

ROTT. Yes, still in the fields! (*To himself.*) I seeded it myself, cut it and bound it myself (*much moved*), but a stranger will gather it.

ENGLBAUER (*annoyed*). A stranger? Do you think the Englbauer of the Alps came floating down a creek?

CLERK. Mrs. Rott, how old are you? I mean, on account of the passports!

MRS. ROTT. I was thirty-six last St. James' Day.

[*Sits down on the steps.*]

ENGLBAUER (*to* ROTT). Two cows are with calf, I see. When will they come in?

ROTT. The black one about Christmas, the one with the blaze was in heat about the feast of St. George.

ENGLBAUER. The oxen are two years old?

ROTT. Yes.

ENGLBAUER. Are they broken to the yoke?

ROTT. Yes, perfectly. Everything is all right. (*Overcome.*) Englbauer, don't talk all the time of house and cattle and fields. I'm sweating blood every moment.

ENGLBAUER (*vehemently*). By all the saints! If I am to lay down twelve hundred dollars, I must be permitted to hurt a little. (*Pause.*) All right, let's go on. I'll see what you have in the house.

COBBLER (*at work*). Englbauer, when will your wife come down?

ENGLBAUER. Her trip to Rome is due tomorrow, the wet-nurse said. And till then I must have a farm. Clerk, you might as well make out the papers today. Lively now, hurry!

CLERK (*angrily*). Of course! Everybody will dance to your tune without delay; wet nurse and clerk! You don't know me!

ENGLBAUER. I know you well! (*Takes a dollar from his pocket and throws it to him.*) There is a dollar!

CLERK (*well pleased*). I am writing. (*Speedily arranges his papers.*) Passports and deeds, all together, like the carrots and the weeds!

ENGLBAUER. Make the deed in the name of Mathies Englbauer.

CLERK (*astonished, stops writing*). But Mathies isn't your name.

ENGLBAUER (*angrily*). But my youngest, when he has arrived, will be baptized Mathies.

CLERK. That's it? But if it be a girl?

ENGLBAUER (*contemptuously*). Don't talk nonsense! A girl! at the Englbauer's? (CLERK *goes on writing.*)

OLD-ROTT (*heatedly*). Christopher, but this must be in the deed: The woods may never be separated from the farm; nor any part of the fields, however small. The farm and the woods and the fields must remain together for all time. If they don't, all the old Rotts will turn in their graves.

ENGLBAUER. God, that would be a jolly rolling about! (*To the* CLERK.) Clerk, insert this in the deed! Everything has to remain together. I want it so myself. (*Pleased.*) 'Twill be a safeguard also for little Mathies.

COBBLER. Englbauer, first he must be here, before you can draw a safeguard for him. (*Goes on working.*)

ROTT (*much moved*). Englbauer, and you must leave my father in his Chamber, as long as he lives. You'll have to give me your hand on that.

ENGLBAUER (*without taking the proffered hand*). What's the use of hands? Clerk, insert it in the deed. That's safer. [*Examines* OLD-ROTT. *Pause.*] Well, Old-Rott, you won't live another fifty years.

OLD-ROTT (*calmly*). The Barber has said two weeks. When the last breath is due, he'll give me a special warning.

ENGLBAUER. What for? Be glad if you don't know it.

OLD-ROTT (*slowly*). I have something to attend to (*looking meaningly at his son*) — something of importance.

CLERK. Hang it all! Now I've spilled ink all over little Mathies. (*Uses the eraser.*)

OLD-ROTT. Christopher, this cherry-tree (*pointing to it*) was planted by my father's father. (*Reminiscently.*) Hundreds of times I hid in its branches when I was a little boy.

ROTT (*smiling*). And I! and Peter. We've eaten cherries up there and bombarded each other with the stones. We carried on whole battles. (*Painfully to himself.*) God knows, I can hardly think of the world without that tree.

OLD-ROTT (*vehemently*). Englbauer, this must be inserted in the deed: The tree shall not be cut. If it is, all the Rotts will turn in their graves.

ENGLBAUER. Again? (*Turning to the* CLERK.) Insert it! — Mathies' own children and children's children shall sport in that tree, eating cherries. (*After a pause.*) But add: As long as the tree is sound. After that it'll have to be cut, or when the wind blows it'll break down and damage the roof. (*Adressing the two* Rotts.) And then of all the old Rotts not one will get out of his grave, I'm sure, to pay the roofer. When it is a question of paying a bill, not one will turn, they'll keep perfectly still. I know the old Rotts. (*Addressing* Mrs. Rott.) Go ahead now, Mrs. Rott, into the house, and open the closets and drawers. I will see what they contain. I am the Englbauer who buys no pig in a poke.

Mrs. Rott (*weeping*). My fine copper kettles! and all the linen which fills four chests. Everything worked and spun at home! It has taken me twenty years, and much I had from my mother, and grandmother (*in despair*) and I must part from everything, as if I'd left the house in death. (*Passes over the steps to the house door. On the steps she suddenly bursts out, addressing her husband.*) You should have kept it a secret instead of upsetting everything!

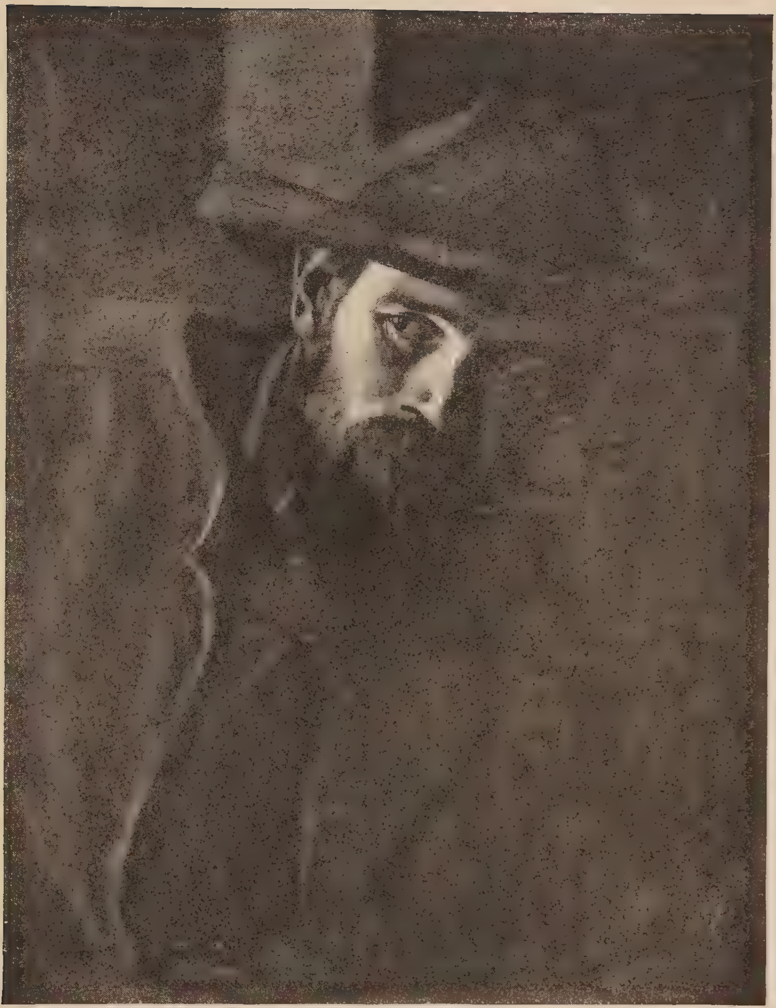
[*Enters the house followed by* Englbauer.]

Rott. Confess, confess, that is the universal call throughout the Bible. Who is neither cold nor hot, him God will cast out!

Old-Rott (*with a worried conscience, wiping the sweat from his brow*). Nowhere a word of comfort, and no comfort at all! (*To himself as if talking to an angry God.*) God in heaven, do not cast me out. When I know that they cannot remove me alive — the Barber will surely tell me — then I too will confess. I will call it out loud —

Rott (*to himself*). Yes, if by then you will be able to call at all.

Cobbler. There! (*Has driven the last nail in* Rott's *shoes. Rises, taking the shoes to* Rott, *who is thoughtfully leaning against the porch.*) But now, Rott, you have a pair of *shoes!* With these shoes you can tramp all over the world. You had better try them right



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A POACHER

away. If they pinch, I'll stretch them a bit over the last. Every new shoe pinches a bit at first, 'till one gets accustomed to it. (*Sits down again, taking up another pair of shoes.*) A cap in front, and a patch on the side! (*Busily at work.*)

ROTT (*bitter*). So it is. One must get accustomed to things — get accustomed. (*He is almost overcome.*) One *must* get accustomed. . . .

[*Sits down on the stone steps before the house and removes, during the next scene, his laced shoes, and tries on the new pair.*]

TINKER-WOLF *and* ROVING-MOLLY *come on the scene, barefooted.*

TINKER-WOLF (*leading the way up to the* CLERK, *talking back to* ROVING-MOLLY). Little Rover, rove up behind me. In the Bible it's written, that it is not good for a man to be alone.

CLERK (*looking up annoyed*). What do these two ragamuffins want?

WOLF. A passport. The wild Trooper has expelled us.

ROVING-MOLLY (*carrying a small bundle*). Because we are of the other faith.

WOLF. I've faith in you, and you in me. Isn't that so, little Rover?

ROVING-MOLLY (*smiling*). I don't call that a bad faith —

CLERK (*gladly*). The writing of no other passport has given me as much pleasure. (*Ready to write.*) Well then, your name?

WOLF. Tinker-Wolf. You know me. You've had me five times in jail, in number seven.

ROVING-MOLLY. And I am Roving-Molly of number eight.

CLERK. I suppose you have family names.

ROVING-MOLLY. Ha, ha! We and family names! Oh, Wolf!

WOLF. We have no family names. We just happen to be.

CLERK (*angrily*). I suppose you had a father and a mother.

ROVING-MOLLY (*laughing*). A father and a mother! We two! Wolf, did you hear that?

CLERK (*very angrily*). Well then, did people shake you from a tree like June bugs? I suppose you came to this world somewhere?

WOLF. I did — in a cart.

OLD-ROTT (*on the bench under the tree*). Disgusting! Folks with no home!

ROVING-MOLLY (*yawning*). Some woman dropped me behind a fence one day.

WOLF. We have neither father nor mother, have we, little Rover?

ROVING-MOLLY. But soon we'll be father and mother ourselves.

COBBLER (*at work, to himself*). And all the world must know that! Woman, you have no shame.

WOLF. See here, little Rover. If our boy once should need a passport, he'll have a much better standing before the Clerk. He can indicate his father and mother.

ROVING-MOLLY. Yes. Our boy shall have a father and a mother.

CLERK (*roughly*). How old?

WOLF. We don't know. We are listed in no church-register.

ROVING-MOLLY. You might write: two people of an age when the sap flows best.

WOLF. Look here, little Rover, our boy must be registered at church.

ROVING-MOLLY. Sure. He'll be the first on our family-tree.

CLERK (*affixing the seal to the passports, drily*). That tree has noble roots. (*Gives the passports to* WOLF.) Here! (*Urging them off.*) And now, fine weather and a happy trip!

WOLF (*happily swinging the passports*). Now, little Rover, no policeman can stop us again on the road. Keep them safe. (*Gives her the passports.*)

ROVING-MOLLY (*takes them, joyfully*). Pushed this way, and pushed that way — that has ended now. (*Places her bundle on the bench, both working over it.*)

WOLF (*when* OLD-ROTT *is trying to move as far away from them as possible*). I won't bite you, you swollen farmer! (*Assists* ROVING-MOLLY *in packing the passports.*) Put them way down, under the household articles!

SANDPERGER (*arriving along the highway; without his hat, fearfully excited. From time to time he looks about him furtively and listens as if he suspected being followed by some invisible person. Approaching* ROTT). Neighbor, I'm making the rounds inviting people to the funeral. She'll be buried today. When the big bell is tolled, I wish you would come to do her the last honor.

COBBLER (*at work, to himself*). Even the big bell. He isn't stingy.

ROTT (*lacing his shoes*). Certainly, neighbor! She was a very good woman. God give her eternal rest.

SANDPERGER. God bless you! (*Pause.*) You know, neighbor, I'll bury her fine; she deserves it. The good shawl with the golden fringe will be used, and I am going to have the big bell tolled, though every strike cost me a dollar! Such a noble day my wife has never yet seen, I'll assure you.

CLERK (*writing the deed*). 'Tis a pity she did not live to see this noble day!

SANDPERGER (*to* ROTT). Do you know, every one who has to leave tomorrow will be at the funeral. 'Twill be a fine corpse!

ROVING-MOLLY (*has stowed away the passports, ready to go*). Look here, Wolf, we'll join the procession.

SANDPERGER (*furiously*). Who has asked you, Roving-Molly? Shut up when free farmers are talking!

TINKER-WOLF (*with much sarcasm*). Darling brother, tomorrow on the highway, we'll all be alike.

[*Leaves with* ROVING-MOLLY.]

SANDPERGER (*deeply stirred*). Tonight I'll sleep once more at home, in my own house, on my own farm.

Cobbler (*pushing a pair of shoes toward him*). Sandy, there are your traveling shoes. You had better take them along now.

Clerk (*who has been searching among his papers, pushing one forward*). Sandy, there's your passport. (*Tearing up another paper.*) Your wife no longer needs one.

[Sandperger, *taking neither the shoes nor the passport, stands motionless, drawing a deep breath.*]

Cobbler. With your wife the wild Trooper fared rather badly yesterday, I think!

[*Has finished his work and proceeds to gather up his tools leisurely.*]

Clerk (*writing*). A prick with the sabre — and then she was dead.

Sandperger (*fiercely to the* Clerk). Dead? Nonsense. She never was so kickingly astir in her whole life as she is now. (*Listens as if somebody was speaking behind him.*) All right, all right, I am going. (*Snatching up his shoes.*) Give me the shoes! (*Takes the passport.*) Give me the passport! (*Glancing at it in bitter scorn.*) Good that I have this passport. Without it they wouldn't let me go tomorrow. (*Listens and then addresses the invisible figure behind him.*) That's all right, I'll conclude the deal with Englbauer. (*Almost in tears.*) Demon, I want to have peace now! (*Turns ready to go.*) If a woman is ever so dead, she can't keep her mouth shut even after that!

[Rott, *having laced and tied his boots, moves about, trying them.*]

Cobbler (*packing up his tools*). Well, Rott, do they hurt you?

Rott (*stamping first one foot then the other, bitterly*). At first every new shoe hurts. . . . (*Shutting his teeth tight in bitter woe.*) One has to get accustomed, get accustomed —

Cobbler. Certainly!

COCK-SPARROW (*enters eagerly, much excited, through the main door*). Father, Englbauer is upstairs, sticking his head in all our boxes and drawers! Is it true that he's going to buy our farm?

ROTT (*sadly playing with his boy's hair*). Yes, Cock-Sparrow. We shan't grow old in this neighborhood. Tomorrow we'll leave for distant parts.

COCK-SPARROW (*in great glee sits down on the ground, strips his shoes and joyfully throws them to the* COBBLER). Cobbler, nail them well and grease them with lard. I don't want to have blisters.

COBBLER (*grumblingly picking up the shoes*). Grease them with lard! Perhaps you want me to fry them in butter!

COCK-SPARROW (*wild with delight throwing himself onto his father's neck*). Hurrah, father. Oh, if't only were tomorrow now. Distant parts—I don't even know how far! (*Laughs in frenzied delight.*) Ha, ha, ha. Oh God, won't I let my eyes take in now this, now that! And now I'll go dancing in the meadow till my tongue hangs out of my mouth.

[*Runs off in overbubbling joy.*]

COBBLER (*leaving in the opposite direction, with a head shake*). He's a wild one!

OLD-ROTT (*in speechless surprise. After awhile with a head shake*). A Rott, and glad to leave home? Is the whole world crazy now?

CLERK (*writing, to himself*). Don't be glad too soon, Cock-Sparrow. You won't fly far.

ROTT. What did you say?

CLERK. I? Nothing.

ROTT. I thought you were speaking of Cock-Sparrow.

CLERK. You only dreamed that.

ENGLBAUER (*leaving the house well satisfied*). I've looked at everything. The furnishings are fine. Your wife has excellent things.

OLD-ROTT. I should think so! She's carted things together like a beaver. Every chest and every drawer full!

ENGLBAUER (*annoyed*). All right, all right! Why be bumptious right away? Other people also have fine things. (*To the* CLERK.) Is the deed ready?

CLERK (*pushing a paper forward*). There it is, ready for your signatures.

ENGLBAUER (*takes the paper, reads it, while* ROTT *stands one side, deeply moved. Addressing* ROTT). Everything is here; about your father and the cherry-tree, and that everything shall remain in one farm. Read it yourself.

ROTT (*moved, refuses to take the paper*). 'Tis all right, if you say so. I know you are honest.

CLERK. Well then, now sign. (ENGLBAUER *signs.*) Rott, now is your turn. (ROTT *signs.*) Your hand is trembling like a lamb's tail. (*After a pause.*) This is your copy, Rott. (ROTT *thoughtfully folds the paper handed him and places it in his breast pocket. The* CLERK *takes the second copy and puts it in his leather bag.*) This will be recorded in the court register; the safeguard for little Mathies.

ENGLBAUER (*very superior and bumptious to* ROTT). Now, I suppose, you'll think that I shan't be able to pay cash. Not at all. I can pay you easily, I have paid more before this; I am Englbauer. (*Taking off his knapsack he produces two well-filled money bags which he places on the bench under the chestnut tree.*) There are twelve hundred dollars to the penny. Count them yourself.

ROTT (*cannot bear to look at the money.*) All right, if you say so. I know you are honest.

ENGLBAUER (*proudly and with the voice of authority.*) My little Mathies, now you may come any time. You'll arrive a farmer. (*Ready to go, to the* CLERK.) Isn't Sandperger about?

CLERK. He is out asking people to the funeral. His wife will be buried today.

ENGLBAUER (*angrily*). How much longer will I have to run after that tightwad? All about his miserable little hut?

CLERK. You are house-mad. Won't you ever have enough?

ENGLBAUER (*looks behind the scene as he turns to leave and noticing* COCK-SPARROW *in the meadow behind the scene calls out to him angrily*). Get out of Mathies' meadow, Cock-Sparrow, right away. I'll teach you! Trampling down all his grass! [*Leaves.*]

CLERK. Little Mathies enters to no gentle tune! [*Pause.*]

ROTT (*in a violent outburst*). I am no longer a farmer! (*Stamping the ground in wild grief.*) The ground on which I stand is no longer mine.

[*At a distance one hears again the brief beat of a drum.*]

CLERK (*deeply moved throws away his quill*). The devil! That the geese should have such soft quills in such hard times!

[*One hears cantering horses. Then one horseman seems to be stopping behind the house.*]

TROOPER (*heated and dusty, in full armor, with food bag and flask enters like a wild storm, fierce and satisfied*). There! you unblessed witch of the Bible! Now you are buried as heretics should be. (*Puts his mouth to the pipe at the well, and takes a long draught.*)

OLD-ROTT (*looking at him, to himself*). The water that he drinks, turns bloody-red, every drop.

TROOPER (*after drinking*). Holy Virgin, close the eyes of your babe lest he get frightened. (*Looks down on himself while a shiver runs through him.*) I'm full of blood everywhere, and the curses of the heretics are fluttering about my pate like swallows about a steeple. (*Stretches himself.*) But I stand erect. I have not learned how to be afraid. Holy Virgin, I will be your good trooper, and take no rest till the last one has left the country. I'll cut them down for you, every one of them!

A Soldier (*leading* Peter Rott *up to the* Trooper). The patrol has poked this fellow from the haystack back of Rott's farm.

[Rott *and his father in silent consternation recognize* Peter.]

Trooper (*standing at the well under the niche with the Madonna picture, looks long at the emaciated figure of* Peter *with his ragged clothes covered with hay and straw*). Who are you?

Peter. A bit of misery.

Trooper (*sympathetically*). How you do look, poor hunted beast? Your clothes in rags! No shoes on your feet!

Peter. I've traveled far — ah, how far! hunger and thirst.

Trooper (*full of sympathy, leads him to a seat, unstraps his own food bag and flask, and taking out some meat and bread hands it to* Peter). Here is my dinner. Eat it (*hands him his flask*) and drink from my flask, poor vagabond! (*Addressing the* Soldier *in anger.*) My bloodhounds are to hunt heretics, but not poor tramps and vagabonds.

[Soldier *retires.* Peter *eats and drinks.*]

Trooper (*to the* Clerk). Have you written the passports?

Clerk. Yes; and they've been called for. (*Pause.*) May I now close the list of exiles?

Trooper (*regarding* Old-Rott). Wait. There is one more. (*Standing before* Old-Rott, *who rises.*) Old man, you have another fine son, I see from the court records, already exiled.

Old-Rott (*wiping the sweat from his brow*). So it is, so it is. The sons, you see, did not take after their father. But I, sir, am all right in my faith.

Trooper. Deceitful old fox. I've found an old verdict in the court-records. (*Draws an old paper from his pocket handing it to the* Clerk.) Read it, noble scribe.

Clerk (*reading*). "This day the farmer Michael Rott was tried on the charge of maliciously persisting in the false doctrine of the heretics, and afterward was executed by the sword. This sixth day of the honey-month." (*Puts the paper aside. To himself.*) I don't believe that honey sweet would be a good word to describe that occurrence.

[ROTT *and* PETER *have risen during the reading of the paper, listening with bared heads.*]

OLD-ROTT (*deeply moved*). Yes, I was six years, when they put thumb screws on my father and killed him with the sword. His last word before the execution was: "What my conscience has recognized as right I shall never forsake." Then his head fell.

TROOPER. Oho! That old devil of heresy was your father? And the disease has eaten on through one hundred years: Father, son, and son's son.

OLD-ROTT (*wiping the sweat of anguish from his face*). Hold on! It has skipped me. That is like a birthmark, sir. The father has it, the son escapes it, and the son's sons have it again.

TROOPER (*angrily*). The whole tree rotten to the core from the roots up, and you alone a healthy branch, deceitful fox? A passport for this old rascal! (*To* OLD-ROTT.) Tomorrow you leave.

OLD-ROTT (*remonstrating, to the* CLERK). Old Ink-squirt, I need no passport. I am quite satisfied at home. (*To the* TROOPER, *baring his breast.*) Have I got a window here that you can look into my inside? As long as I do not confess you cannot drive me out. You have to take what I say. To satisfy you I'll swear it in church before the altar—(*meaningly looking at* ROTT) swear it—till my last breath.

PETER (*suddenly addressing his father, beseechingly*). Father, confess. Oh father. God will not have those either who carry the mantle on both shoulders.

OLD-ROTT (*furiously, threatening him with his cane*). Get away, I don't know you.

ROTT (*to his father, imploringly*). Father, do what Peter says.

PETER. Father, Christopher and I — all of us bear and suffer. There is no rest at all until one has confessed.

OLD-ROTT (*vehemently repelling his sons*). Get away, both of you. (*To the* TROOPER.) No, sir, you won't bury me away from home.

TROOPER (*to* PETER). Father — brother, you say? You are the other son, the exile, and you are back again?

PETER. Let me tramp and walk one thousand hours and more, my feet will carry me in a circle. Every road leads home.

TROOPER (*beckoning the* SOLDIER, *who is standing in the background*). See that he leaves the country.

PETER (*falling on his knees before the* TROOPER). Put me in the stocks, throw me in the dungeon where neither sun nor moon will shine, only leave me here. Here was I born, here I must remain.

TROOPER (*looking at the miserable figure at his feet, suddenly gripped by great compassion*). Forswear, poor vagabond. I will be a brother to you — (*extends his hand to him, then addressing* ROTT) and to you, to all of you — [*Pause.*]

PETER. I can't do it. Faith rests with God.

TROOPER (*with a voice hard as steel to the* SOLDIER). Drive him out of the country ,with the butts of your guns. (SOLDIER *leads* PETER *off.*)

OLD-ROTT (*gasping*). Do your best, all of you. You won't bury me away from home. (*Again a drum is heard, this time nearer than before.*)

ROTT. Trooper, you have the power. You can break us, but you cannot bend us.

TROOPER (*foaming with wrath*). Christopher Rott, you will yet grovel before me. (*To the* DRUMMER *who appears.*) Drummer, the order! Read the proclamation!

[THE DRUMMER *gives an incisive beat on his drum.* MRS. ROTT *appears in the door. All are listening.*]

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THE HUNTSMAN

THE DRUMMER. Citizens and peasants! Come out of your houses, open your doors and your ears. The Emperor says: "Whoever confesses the other faith and does not forswear must leave. Heretic men and their women are to be driven out. The orthodox women may remain at home!"

MRS. ROTT (*shrilly*). Much obliged for that favor. I'll go with him, all right.

THE DRUMMER. "Grown-up children may go with their parents. Minor children will be kept at home and be brought up in the good old faith."

MRS. ROTT. Minor children . . . be kept at home.

[*She reels.*]

TROOPER (*seated on the well curb*). With God's help we'll save the young children from everlasting damnation.

ROTT. My Cock-Sparrow! (*Pause.*) Now the really great sorrow has begun.

[*Sinks on his knees to the ground.* THE DRUMMER *leaves, beating the drum, the sound disappearing in the distance.*]

MRS. ROTT (*shrilly*). Forswear!

ROTT (*slowly rising*). That's right. Now they've got me in the trap. One's own child is an excellent bait.

MRS. ROTT. Raise your hand.

ROTT. Yes indeed. "Father, bite!" (*Raises his hand for the oath slowly, hesitatingly to half the necessary height. Then to his wife.*) But wife, I tell you, from this day on I shan't be able to look Cock-Sparrow straight in the eye. (*Drops his hand.*) No, I can never do it.

MRS. ROTT. Forswear! Our team of three must not be parted.

ROTT. Yes indeed! Now they've caught me well. (*Making a hard decision.*) "Father, bite!" (*Slowly raises his hand to half the necessary height, then slowly drops it again.*) Wife, this I tell you, from this day on I shall not be able to say to Cock-Sparrow: "Do right according to your conscience!" No, and again no, I cannot do it. (*Breathes heavily.*)

TROOPER (*quietly, still seated on the well curb*). Christopher Rott, are you yielding?

ROTT (*wildly, advancing toward the* TROOPER, *as if threatening him*). Oh you, little man, you are nothing but a miserable little man!

[TROOPER *seated on the well curb quietly draws his sword and lays it across his knees.*]

ROTT. Butcher, whet your knife! (*Stopping in front of him.*) There, cut my body into bloody rags, you can't do anything to me. (*Making a mighty resolution and turning to his wife.*) Dear wife, now we'll have to arrange matters differently. Send word to your mother. The brood-hen must come to fetch you two tomorrow, you and Cock-Sparrow; you'll stay with your mother.

MRS. ROTT (*quickly, nervously*). And you?

ROTT. I?— (*Takes her hands.*) Wife, we'll be reunited sometime. When Cock-Sparrow is of age, you'll join me with him.

MRS. ROTT (*tottering*). Our team of three separated!

ROTT (*in agony*). I must do as my conscience tells me. And if it happened again, I'd have to do the same again. Against my conscience I cannot act. (*To his father with the stubbornness of one who has confessed.*) Father, follow your conscience. I and Peter, Sandperger and Unteregger; we bear and suffer, all of us. Father, do bear together with us. (*Growing more vehement.*) Father, unburden yourself! Do not stoop before that (*contemptuously*) trooper-boy.

[TROOPER *seated on the well curb bites his lips till they bleed.*]

OLD-ROTT (*pushes him away*). Get away! You won't bury me away from home. Here I will lie, where the Rotts are at home. Father and father's father, and farther back through five hundred years!

Sandperger (*rushes in, right up to* Rott, *cuttingly*). Neighbor, you needn't come to the funeral. She is already buried—quite grandly!

Rott (*astonished*). I didn't hear the bell.

Sandperger (*bursting out into a harsh laughter*). May be a dead dog did the barking. Six soldiers carried her, very grandly, from the funeral bed to the (*shrieking*) —carrion-pit! (*Drops to the ground.*)

[Old-Rott, *with bulging eyes, rises.*]

Trooper (*on the well curb, the unsheathed sword over his knees*). Yes, that's the way I have all heretics buried.

Old-Rott. In the carrion-pit! An Old-Rott—by the side of a dead dog! (*Like a tree which a storm tears from the ground.*) Clerk, a passport, a passport! (*Yells his confession into the face of the* Trooper.) Trooper! I am one of them, an evangelical follower of Christ!

Trooper. At last, old fox, you are smoked out? (*Throws his sword into the scabbard.*)

Clerk (*correcting his list*). Two hundred and fourteen. (*Pause.*) Thank God, we are rid of the thirteen.

Trooper (*before the Madonna picture*). Tomorrow when the drum beats the signal I'll drive the last one out of the country—for your sake.

Sandperger (*jumps up like a charging snake*). But today I'll sleep at home in my house on my own farm!

Old-Rott (*unmanned, beseeching* Rott). Christopher, put me on the cart. Let's be off across the frontier. I can't be gone quick enough. Now! away, away! I haven't much time. (*Collapses.*) I'm hearing the swish of the sickle.

Rott (*sadly busy about his father*). Father, has the time come when you'll be breathing your last?

Old-Rott (*rising with a mighty exertion*). Not yet, Lord Jesus Christ! Let me cross the frontier alive, that I may honorably lie (*in deep sorrow*) in a foreign land!

ACT III

The same scene as in the second act. A low-two-wheeled rather roomy cart is standing before the house. In front of the cart, on the ground, there is a can of carriage grease, and an axe lies nearby. Early morning. A glorious sun rising over a fresh landscape sparkling in the dew.

Rott (*ready for the trip, is seated on the well curb. He is in short-sleeves reading his Bible*). "Lord Thou hast overwhelmed my soul; Thy waters have gone over my soul. The plowers plowed upon my back; they made long their furrows. The earth whence my bread came they turned with fire and devastated my fields. They have destroyed my house. The road which I walk the birds do not know, and the eye of the eagle does not see it. (*Elated.*) Yet they have not prevailed against me; my soul escaped as a bird out of the snare of the fowlers. He has made me a tabernacle in the sun which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, and rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race."

Mrs. Rott (*comes from the house with pillows and a feather bed, which she proceeds to distribute in the cart*). Father can hardly wait for the moment to start.

Rott (*looking up from the Bible*). I have no such difficulty.

Mrs. Rott (*arranging the pillows*). Soon the drum will beat the signal for departure.

Rott. Do make the seat soft, that father won't feel the jars too much. (*To himself.*) My poor father, he could never go even for half an hour to the next village without being homesick. It always seemed to him he was in a foreign country there.

Mrs. Rott (*stopping in her work, with much hesitancy*). And then — you must inform Cock-Sparrow of the order, that he cannot go with us.

Rott (*closing his Bible, greatly troubled*). I must do everything that is hard. Everything rolls on over me, like a loaded drag.

Mrs. Rott. Let us leave it then! My mother has been notified. She should be here any moment; and then he'll learn the news soon enough.

Rott (*sighing*). That's what I am thinking (*Has risen and approaches the cart with his Bible in his hand.*) A place for my Bible. (*Stores the book in the cart.*) We'll need this comfort!

Mrs. Rott. Father said for you to grease the wheels well lest the cart break down.

Rott (*who has already taken up the axe*). I'm about to do it. (*Loosens one wheel with the axe and applies grease to the axle.*)

Mrs. Rott. If you don't, he says, he'll die in this country and they'll bury him like a dog.

Cock-Sparrow (*enters across the bridge, walking briskly*). Soldiers are riding through the streets and alleys. Father, mother, are you ready? Then let's go.

[Rott *does not look up from his work. He clears his throat and tries to master his strong emotion by great activity.*]

Mrs. Rott. Where do you come from?

Cock-Sparrow. From way above, from the woods.

Mrs. Rott. You can never sit still, you bit of mercury!

Cock-Sparrow. Why should I be sitting still now, when we are going to tramp? Isn't that so, father?

[Rott, *very busy with the wheels, clears his throat, but does not look up.*]

Mrs. Rott (*after studying her boy*). And your pants are torn again? I'll have a pair made of tin for you.

Cock-Sparrow (*examines the tear in his trousers*). No wonder when I am sitting in the top of a hackmatack tree as high as a church steeple.

Mrs. Rott (*angrily*). Didn't I tell you only yesterday not to climb a tree?

Rott. What did you do in the hackmatack top?

Cock-Sparrow. Nothing.

ROTT (*stops working, sits down*). Then, why did you climb up?

MRS. ROTT. To offend his mother. (*Presses her apron to her eyes.*)

COCK-SPARROW (*warmly and heartily*). But mother, why should I wish to offend you! You should not think that, surely not, mother! I didn't think of anything. (*Describing how things happened.*) I happened to look up from below to the top, and then I thought, " Up there would be a lovely place to sit." Then I climbed up hand over fist.

MRS. ROTT (*cannot suppress a smile*). And was it a very lovely and comfortable place to sit in?

COCK-SPARROW (*laughs out loud*). I came within an ace of tumbling down. (*Impatiently and urgently.*) Aren't we going soon? What are we waiting for?

ROTT (*slowly and heavily*). For the brood-hen.

COCK-SPARROW (*who does not understand, laughs*). For whom?

ROTT (*overcome by his feelings, suddenly pulls his boy close to his side*). Come here! (*Presses him to his breast tenderly.*) Now let's have a talk.

COCK-SPARROW (*astonished, laughs*). Father, you are strong today. Ouch! You are breaking my ribs.

ROTT. That's the way I am today. (*Embracing him again and again.*) Again! And once again. And be a true man, Cock-Sparrow mine, a true man, I tell you, when you grow up.

COCK-SPARROW (*easily*). Surely, father! Why not? (*Suddenly tears himself from his father's embrace, and listens.*) I hear a drum in the distance. I'll see what's up. (*Runs off at top speed across the bridge.*)

MRS. ROTT (*severely*). I want you to stay here. We have to talk with you.

ROTT (*looks after him with great satisfaction. Smilingly*). He is off again, the little romp.

Mrs. Rott. He heard you all right, but what he does not wish to hear, to that he gives no heed. (*In despair.*) Christopher, that boy draws my temper. How can I train him alone, without a man?

Rott (*draws* Mrs. Rott *to his side and takes her hands, which he pets over and over again as if to give weight to his words*). My dear, dear wife, do not despair. Things will come out all right, but you'll have to adapt yourself a little to him.

Mrs. Rott (*rather angrily, but laughingly*). Oh that's it? I adapt myself to him?

Rott. Do understand me. You'll have to take him as he is grown. A stone cannot be served as a piece of cake. And if you should break on him a hundred hazel sticks, you'll only hurt yourself and him to no good end. (*Pets her hands sincerely.*) Look here, wife; give the boy his head, don't fuss and fume about him all the time, as you women are apt to do. Cock-Sparrow will grow up right. Believe me. He is of good family, open and honest, nor does he know deceit or falsehood.

Mrs. Rott (*worried*). But his obstinacy, his thick head!

Rott. Leave him alone. To have a mind of one's own means strength. With it he made — when he was a hop o' my thumb — the Emperor (*rises for one moment in reverence*) get off his horse. You would never have accomplished this. Let him have his way and his puppyish foolishness! (*Gets up and continues solemnly and firmly.*) But when life later brings up a weighty matter there (*beats his breast with his fists*) then I won't have him yield, not before sword or spear, not for life or death. So I will have him, so you must train him, so you must bring him to me when at last he has grown up. Then I'll be pleased. (*Much touched, takes both hands of his wife.*) And now I bid you, too, good-by before the people come. God bless you, and many thanks to you, dear wife, for everything. You've been to me a faithful helpmeet in good and evil times.

MRS. ROTT (*hanging on his neck, in tears*). Dear Christopher, that this had to come to pass!

ROTT. We could not help it. It is no fault of yours or mine. (*Raises his finger.*) Let others account for it. (*Controls himself with difficulty.*) No tears, wife, a stiff neck, and they cannot down us. (*Puts her hands to his eyes.*) There, feel my eyes. They are dry, aren't they? (*In tremendous energy hiding his sorrow and compelling himself to be jocose to make the parting easier for his wife.*) For heaven's sake no water, a pitcher of wine would suit me better. (*Merrily for her sake.*) And when you and Cock-Sparrow follow me, he'll be a trump of a fellow, his face covered with a beard, or perhaps only with down since he's a sparrow. And you'll have no end of wrinkles and crow's feet. Perhaps I shan't like you then any more and have got another girl before you come. (*Kindly and warm heartedly.*) No, no; don't be afraid. I'll wait for you, and be glad to see you, even if you'll be an old vixen by then.

MRS. ROTT (*smiling*). Now I'll really have to laugh, you foolish man. Do you think you'll remain young, away from home?

ROTT (*glad at her laughter*). All right then, as long as you're laughing. Keep that up, then things will be easier. (*Steps up to the cart, examines the cushions with his hand.*) Put another cushion here for father. (*Thoughtfully.*) You know, the road is in a wretched condition.

[MRS. ROTT *enters the house.* ROTT *takes the axe, loosens the other wheel and greases the axle during the following scene.*]

ENGLBAUER (*with a knapsack enters from the right. He carries a spade and a young pear-tree. Briefly*). Good morning. Are you going soon?

ROTT. Yes, almost any minute.

[ENGLBAUER *entirely occupied with his own affairs,* *puts the tree and the spade down, and marks off a place in front of the house.*]

ROTT. What have you got there?

ENGLBAUER. Well, what should I have here? A young pear-tree.

ROTT (*at work*). What are you going to do with it?

ENGLBAUER. Plant it, in front of my house. (*Has taken off his coat and begins to dig a hole.*) The tree will have to grow up together with my little Mathies.

ROTT. Has he arrived.

ENGLBAUER (*without looking up; drily*). Partly yes, partly no. He is arriving hind part first. He will scorn the world, the Barber says. (*Goes on digging.*)

MRS. ROTT (*enters with a pillow which she places in the cart*). Father says for you to examine the axles carefully, and be sure that nothing will break. If you don't, he says he'll die on the road and they will bury him like a dog.

ROTT (*fastening the second wheel*). What should break? The blacksmith repaired everything last month.

MRS. ROTT (*much annoyed, to* ENGLBAUER). Your heart does not trouble you, or you would have waited with your work until we had left the house.

ENGLBAUER (*unable to understand*). Nonsense! 'Twould have been a loss of time. (*The beat of a drum is heard approaching from a distance.*)

[ROTT *stops working, stands as if rooted to the ground, with the axe in his hand.* MRS. ROTT *likewise.* ENGLBAUER *unmoved by all the misery continues to work.*]

DRUMMER (*arrives from the left beating a short and brutally harsh signal. Stops*). Leave the country! Heretic men and women depart from your houses and farms! The children are to stay! (*Resumes drumming as he leaves by the right. One hears him repeat the announcement behind the scene at some distance. Then the drumming begins again and is gradually lost* *in the distance. The* Drummer *has brought great commotion.*)

Mrs. Rott (*shrilly*). Now the hour has come, the grievous hour!

Rott (*overcome by an uncontrolled passion of home, hurls the axe about his head and drives it deep into the cherry-tree*). There the swallow found her nest and the bird his home. (*Collapses in great sorrow on the bench about the tree.*)

Sandperger (*in violent commotion rushes in, calling after the* Drummer). Drummer, beat your drum! (*Yells until the cords of his neck are swollen and look like strands of rope.*) Beat, beat! Beat! (*Collapses on the well curb exhausted.*)

Old-Rott (*more decrepit than at first, leaves his house slowly. His big eyes rest searchingly on the bridge*). Does the mill stream not run red today? (*Addressing the sky.*) Does it not rain iron rods? (*Shakes his head in great astonishment.*) Everything the same as 't has always been?

[Englbauer *carefully places his little pear-tree in the hole he has dug.*]

Barber (*entering hurriedly, out of breath, and waving his hat, cheerfully, to* Englbauer). Englbauer, little Mathies has arrived. He weighs fully ten pounds.

Englbauer (*taking off his hat, as if he were praying*). Little Mathies, God bless your entrance into this world. (*Indicating* Rott's *house and farm.*) Here is your home. Live and thrive and found a family!

[*Puts on his hat, and during the next scene fills the hole, where he has planted the tree.*]

[Old-Rott *tottering with a sudden attack of weakness, and almost collapsing.*]

Rott (*jumping to his assistance*). Father, are you ill?

Barber (*approaches*). Rest a little, Old-Rott!

[Rott *and* Barber *try to lead him to the bench.*]

OLD-ROTT (*in violent remonstrance, fearful lest death be near, urges haste*). No rest! Christopher, let's be off. Away, away! I cannot last long.

ROTT. Right away, father. In the meanwhile sit down.

OLD-ROTT (*shakes his head in refusal and takes the* BARBER's *arm*). Barber, you lead me on to the road! On the first cart that comes along I'll take my seat. (*Pulling the* BARBER *toward the bridge, in fear.*) I have not much time. I must go to die — in a foreign land that I may lie honorably.

[*Leaves in the direction of the bridge, supported by the* BARBER.]

SANDPERGER (*at the well curb*). I am like one run dry! (*Starts to drink.*) Let me drink, drink! I wish I could drink death! (*Puts his mouth hungrily to the pipe.*)

[OLD-ROTT *stops once more on the bridge giving a last long look at the* ROTT *farm.*]

BARBER (*gently turning* OLD-ROTT's *head*). Old-Rott, don't look back again!

[OLD-ROTT *and* BARBER *cross the bridge and disappear on the highway.*]

ROTT (*to his wife*). Where may your mother be delaying? You had better go to meet her.

MRS. ROTT (*looks toward the bridge as she is leaving, addressing* ROTT). Cock-Sparrow is coming there.

[*Leaves at left.*]

ROTT (*stands still in great emotion*). Things are moving. (*Calling aloud.*) Cock-Sparrow, come here!

COCK-SPARROW (*much heated, enters across the bridge at a run*). Father, they are going! Everywhere they are gathering, laden with bundles as if they were beasts of burden. Down there at the crossroad lots of them are collected, and to the right and left there is a long row of soldiers.

SANDPERGER (*in collapse on the well-curb, his teeth are chattering, while he mutters to himself*). Soldiers — Soldiers — Soldiers —

COCK-SPARROW. Father.

ROTT. Well?

COCK-SPARROW. One thing seemed funny.

ROTT. What was it?

COCK-SPARROW. All the people I saw were grown-up. I am the only boy.

ROTT (*clearing his throat*). Hm!

COCK-SPARROW. Father, do start. (*Looks about him.*) Where is mother? Even old grandpa is gone ahead. Must we be the last? That would be a shame.

[*Steps to the cart which he tries to push ahead.*]

ROTT (*greatly moved, gently pulls him away from the cart*). Not so eager! You have plenty of time.

COCK-SPARROW. Then I'll run to get something more. [*Runs into the house.*]

[UNTEREGGER *with walking stick and bulging knapsack arrives from the right. He is walking vigorously, looking neither to right nor left.*]

SANDPERGER (*laughing bitterly*). Well, Unteregger, how do you feel now, on the move?

UNTEREGGER (*stopping a moment and dully looking about from under his load, like one hard of hearing*). What's that?

SANDPERGER (*as if talking to one hard of hearing*). How are you feeling?

UNTEREGGER (*dully as if grief has exterminated his soul*). I am feeling nothing, neither good nor evil. (*Tries to pull* SANDPERGER *along with him in wild determination.*) Come along, come along, tramp and vagabond!

SANDPERGER. As yet, I am a farmer.

[UNTEREGGER, *alone and without stopping, leaves by the bridge with long strides.*]

ENGLBAUER (*has stamped the earth carefully about the little tree. He then takes from his pocketbook several rolls of money, which he places in front of* SANDPERGER *on the well-curb. Resolutely.*) Sandy, we agreed on two hundred and three dollars. Here they are.

Count them yourself and pocket them. You'll no longer say: Time enough till tomorrow.

SANDPERGER (*seated on the well-curb, without touching the money*). But you've got what you want: Nine boys, nine farms!

ENGLBAUER (*angrily*). You are a fool. Do you think I'll stop at nine? I'm good for a few more years. (*Pushes the money near to* SANDPERGER.) Count them and pocket them.

SANDPERGER (*pushing the money from him*). No, no! Englbauer. I won't inflict it on you. For you would be cheated with that old ruin of a house. There are three great cracks in the walls, and the roof timbers are rotten, and my wife haunts the chamber.

ENGLBAUER (*who is looking off to the right*). There is the Trooper coming. He'll show you the way now.

SANDPERGER (*to himself with chattering teeth*). The Trooper, Trooper, Trooper!

The TROOPER *enters from the right, accompanied by a soldier and the clerk who is holding a list in his hand.*

CLERK (*reading from the list*). Christopher Rott of the third house!

ROTT (*firmly*). Here.

TROOPER (*to* ROTT). The old devil of a heretic is already driving along the road, mounted on a high cart. Follow him!

ROTT. When the brood hen gets here.

CLERK (*reading from the list*). Sandperger of the fourth house.

SANDPERGER. Sandperger is my name. Sandy for short.

TROOPER. Away with you!

[SANDPERGER *clings in fear to the curb with both arms.*]

TROOPER (*beckoning to the* SOLDIER). Bloodhound, seize him.

[SOLDIER *seizes* SANDPERGER, *tries to tear him from the well.*]

ENGLBAUER (*once more pushing the money toward him*). Count it and pocket it, tramp and vagabond.

SANDPERGER (*gasping*). As yet I am a farmer.

SOLDIER (*tearing his hands from the pillar*). Let go! or I'll cut your hands off, those claws of heresy.

SANDPERGER (*torn away by the* SOLDIER). Trooper, let me speak, only one little word.

TROOPER (*inexorably*). Away with you.

SANDPERGER. One little word, Trooper, for the Blessed Virgin's sake.

TROOPER (*to the* SOLDIER). Bloodhound, desist! (*When the* SOLDIER *has released* SANDPERGER, *to the* SOLDIER.) Go to the fifth house in the meanwhile, and drive out Waldpichler. Make him take the road. (*With a look to the S. Mary niche in the pillar.*) Grant that we soon get rid of the whole devil's brood! (SOLDIER *leaves at right.* TROOPER *to* SANDPERGER.) Speak, but be brief.

[SANDPERGER *gasping, looks anxiously and furtively behind him, as if afraid his dead wife might be standing there. Then he raises his fingers for the oath several times very quickly, apparently unconsciously, withdrawing them with equal rapidity. Finally the hand remains raised. It is trembling violently. So is the whole man, standing there pale, with his lips convulsively compressed.*]

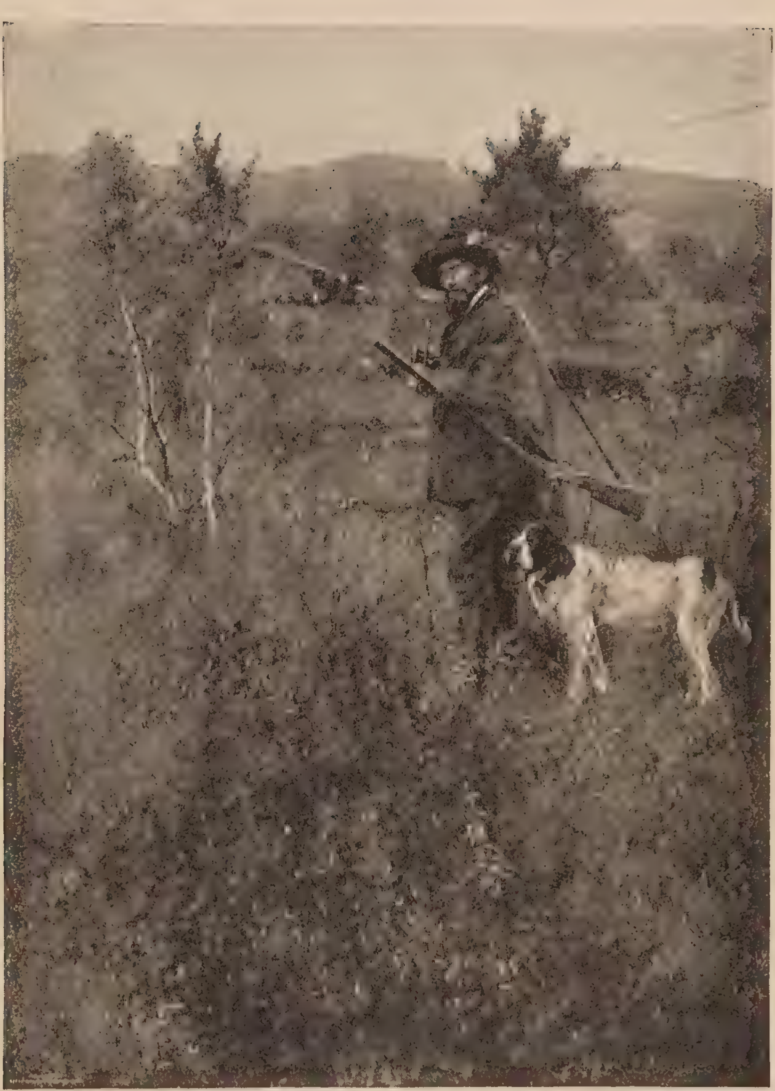
ENGLBAUER (*greatly astonished and outraged*). Rott, look. Do my eyes deceive me? He is actually raising his three fingers.

TROOPER (*in glad surprise*). You will forswear?

[SANDPERGER, *unable to speak. He moves his lips silently, and looks behind him furtively; finally he nods affirmatively.*]

TROOPER. From inside conviction? And not for the sake of remaining here?

SANDPERGER. For the sake of remaining here? I? Have I lost anything here? A stony field; sweat and work; a ruined house with rotten roof timbers; and—my



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A FARMER HUNTSMAN

wife haunting the chamber! (*Bursting into a wild guffaw.*) For the sake of remaining here! (*With hidden scorn.*) My inspiration has come from the inside.

TROOPER (*growing happier every moment*). And will you recant the devil's faith on Sundays before the church?

SANDPERGER (*wiping the sweat from his brow is looking about him furtively. Very softly, that his wife may not hear him*). Yes, I'll do everything, swear (*more to himself*) — that the devil has neither tail nor home. (*Loud.*) On Sundays before the church with a candle of shame in my hand.

TROOPER (*to the* CLERK). Excellent Clerk, cross off Sandperger of the fourth house.

ENGLBAUER (*snatching his money from the bench and pocketing it, with a finger raised in warning*). Sandperger, I'll see you yet hanging from your casement window!

CLERK (*looks into his lists and crossing off a name*). Here, then, out you go! (*After a pause.*) The devil, now we are back again to number thirteen.

TROOPER (*in front of* SANDPERGER. *Human sympathy like a mighty stream dammed for some time*). Sandperger, you poor fellow. I've skinned you badly, beaten your body, but saved your soul. Now, what kindness can I do you? Ask anything. My heart stands wide, wide open. Down there at the fence is my horse. The saddle bags contain all my worldly possessions, two bags of money. Take one of them; I'll divide with you. No, wait. Take both. Empty the pocket, completely, you are my brother.

SOLDIER (*entering hastily with a report*). Waldpichler has nailed his doors and windows and hidden in his cellar.

TROOPER (*angrily*). You damned woodchuck! I'll burn you out with pitch and fire, you insect of hell. (*Turns to go, but stops to address* ROTT.) Your turn next. (*With a look full of meaning at the S. Mary niche in the pillar.*) The last one!

ROTT. I'll not stay here.

[TROOPER, CLERK, *and* SOLDIER *leave hurriedly at the right.*]

CLERK (*the last one to leave, hunting in his lists*). Waldpichler. . . . where is he? (*Turning the leaves.*) He has hidden himself even in the lists. (*Finding the name.*) Ah, here he is! (*Angrily snaps the spot, where the name is written, with his finger.*)

SANDPERGER (*in front of* ROTT, *outwardly perfectly quiet*). Rott, spit out in disgust. I've done it!

ROTT. Neighbor, I am not your judge. Every one according to his light!

SANDPERGER (*dully, half to himself*). Yes, oh yes! Old-Rott is already on the way, seated on a high cart, as the Trooper says — my brother the Trooper, you know. Soon you'll also go, then all'll be gone — except the spot of blood in front of my hut, on the doorsill. Whenever I cross it, from now on, it will run afresh. (*Wiping the sweat of anguish from his face.*) Look here, neighbor, I can hardly await the coming night. (*Laughs in scornful grief.*) Ha, ha! Tonight she'll chase me, like a horse locked in a burning stable. (*In growing anguish.*) Alone in my hut forsaken by God and beasts. To be lying there in the anguish of a troubled conscience! No one to speak for me! No inner comfort! (*Chattering in fear.*) And my wife haunts the chamber!

ROTT. You'll be in your little house as if you were in hell.

SANDPERGER (*with a groan of despair*). Just so. As if in hell! Cursed by God and damned for life. (*As if the sun were struggling through gloomy clouds.*) But, do you know, neighbor? I am in *my own* little house, after all. Do you know, neighbor (*turning to leave, in despair*), as if in hell. . . . (*With a note of growing cheerfulness.*) But I am at home, after all (*in ecstasy*) — in *my own* little house. . . . *at home.*

[*Leaves by left.*]

ROTT (*deeply moved, looking after him*). Neighbor, you are stronger than any of us.

[COCK-SPARROW, *ready for the trip, with a bundle of sticks for catching birds, and a small wooden bird-cage, comes from the house joyfully.*]

ROTT (*in astonishment*). Now, what have you got there? A bird house?

COCK-SPARROW (*nodding*). And sticks with bird lime.

ROTT. And what will you do with them?

COCK-SPARROW. Catch a little bird, at the first stop.

ROTT (*clearing his throat*). Hm! (*Pause.*) And what'll you do with the bird?

COCK-SPARROW. Put it in this tiny house.

ROTT. And what'll you do with the bird in the house?

COCK-SPARROW. I'll hang it here in front on the cart (*steps to the cart where he fastens the cage*) that we may have with us on the trip something that can sing.

ROTT (*deeply moved, turns away and sees* MRS. ROTT *and her mother arriving from the left, with a heavy sigh*). The brood hen will sing for you.

MOTHER (*passing* ROTT, *goes up to* COCK-SPARROW, *who had been engaged in fastening the bird-cage on the cart, and had not noticed her arrival*). Cock-Sparrow, have you collected your things? If you haven't, come along as you are!

COCK-SPARROW (*astonished, pleased, warmly*). Oh, it's you, grandma? You've made a special trip down the mountain, and with your lame foot! to bid us God-speed!

MOTHER (*tries to draw him away with her*). Come, come—do not delay—away (*with a slanting glance at* ROTT) from here.

COCK-SPARROW. I should have been gone long ago, I tell you, but father and mother have been dilly-dallying right along. [*Bids good-by to her heartily, constantly shaking her hands, while she is shaking her head and looks at him wonderingly.*] Well then, God bless you, grandma! Live long and prosper. Do you hear, I want you to live one hundred years after eternity. And your lame foot shall grow well, I hope. Do you hear, grandma? That you'll be able to run again like a grayhound. Listen, grandma, and then you'll follow us, when you're stronger on your legs, will you? You surely will.

MOTHER (*shaking her head in surprise and feeling the boy's head*). What's the matter with you here? (*Then taking hold of his sleeve.*) Come now! (*Taking hold of* MRS. ROTT *with her other hand.*) And you, too, both of you, up the mountain to my place. With me you'll be safe in these wild times. (*Warmly.*) I'll spread my wings over you, and keep from harm your souls and your bodies. (*Anxiously trying to hurry them off.*)

COCK-SPARROW (*freeing himself, and after looking in astonishment at his grandmother, to his father*). Father, grandma has lost her reason.

[ROTT, *unable to speak, much moved, plays silently with his boy's hair. The* TROOPER *and the* SOLDIER *make their appearance beyond the bridge.*]

TROOPER (*still on the other side of the bridge, to the* SOLDIER). Stand guard here. [*The* SOLDIER *remains where he is told. The* TROOPER *noisily passes the bridge and entering the courtyard addresses* ROTT.] Leave the country.

[ROTT *slowly approaches the cart, and gets ready.*]

COCK-SPARROW (*joyfully at the cart*). Father, let me push off. Mother, let's start.

TROOPER (*roughly pulling* COCK-SPARROW *from the cart*). You'll stay here!

[COCK-SPARROW *stares at the* TROOPER *without understanding; finally his eyes are looking searchingly at his father.*]

ROTT (*stepping up to his son, almost tearing his son's hair instead of playing with it, can hardly utter these words*). Cock-Sparrow, only grown-up people are permitted to leave. That's . . . why you . . . did not see . . . any boys . . .

TROOPER. Young souls we'll yet save — from everlasting perdition! [COCK-SPARROW *as if turned to stone.*]

ROTT. You and your mother will have to stay here with our brood hen.

MRS. ROTT. And when you are grown up, boy, we two'll follow your father. . . .

ROTT. While I in the meanwhile . . . will be building . . . a new nest for you. . . .

MOTHER (*trying to pull* COCK-SPARROW *away with her, anxiously and urgently*). Come, my little chick . . . I'll keep you warm nor let evil come near you in these wild times. . . .

COCK-SPARROW (*who had been standing stiff and as if turned into stone, suddenly explodes wildly, and tears himself free*). I've never hid behind a woman's skirt!

MRS. ROTT (*angrily, to* COCK-SPARROW). Is your hot temper riding you again?

COCK-SPARROW (*with rising temper*). I shan't stay here. I'll run away. [*Runs toward the bridge.*]

TROOPER (*calling to the* SOLDIER *who is standing on the other side of the bridge*). Bloodhound, attention!

SOLDIER (*with drawn sword keeps* COCK-SPARROW *from passing, drives him back*). Turn back!

ROTT. Cock-Sparrow, come here. Your father will arrange matters.

COCK-SPARROW (*remains on the bridge*). You cannot budge me, all of you!

TROOPER (*speaking in the direction of the boy*). Young trees we'll bend all right.

COCK-SPARROW (*on the bridge, losing his temper completely*). Dirty Trooper, you won't bend me!

TROOPER (*furiously*). Wait, you pole cat!

[*Runs toward the bridge.*]

COCK-SPARROW (*quick as lightning has jumped on the railing. Sitting there astride he mockingly puts his right thumb to his nose waving his fingers in derision at the* TROOPER). There! Have you got me?

[*When the* TROOPER *steps onto the bridge to catch him, he slips from the railing into the mill stream.*]

MRS. ROTT (*in loud agony*). In the mill stream!

MOTHER (*with the rosary*). Holy Mother!

MRS. ROTT. Help!

[*Runs off to the left.* TROOPER *quickly unbuckles his sword which he throws down, ready to give help.*]

ROTT (*who has equally quickly thrown off his coat, wild and threatening to the* TROOPER). Oh you! Don't you dare to follow!

TROOPER (*on the point of jumping in the stream, stops*). Christopheros! Art still carrying alone?

MOTHER (*who has entwined her fingers in the rosary*). Oh holy patron against danger from water, help! (*Limping off to the right.*) There's your chapel. I'll dedicate to you six candles. [*Leaves.*]

SOLDIER (*on the bridge, eagerly looking down toward the left, to the* TROOPER). The current is driving him toward the mill.

TROOPER (*rushing up to him, furiously*). What are you mouthing here? Off with you to the others.

[SOLDIER *leaves in the direction of the bridge.*]

TROOPER (*leaning far over the railing of the bridge, and anxiously looking toward the left*). 'Twould be a pity, if that wild cat . . . There's race in that brood.

TINKER-WOLF *and* ROVING-MOLLY (*passing from the right toward the bridge. They are barefooted and are walking arm-in-arm, singing together, half under their breath*):

We are Lutheran and single,
Stay away from church, and mingle,
Without any sacrament;
No one damns us poor varmint. . . .

WOLF. Little Rover, listen! In the distant land we will succeed. We shall drudge and toil, till we own a weeny-teeny house, and a weeny-teeny garden about it, for our young one to careen in.

WOLF *and* ROVING-MOLLY (*sauntering arm-in-arm toward the bridge, happy as the day is long, and humming*):

We are Lutheran and single
Stay away from church, and mingle
Without any sacrament;
No one damns us poor varment. . . .

[*They pass the* TROOPER, *who does not notice them, and disappear across the bridge.* TROOPER, *who has been leaning over the railing, eagerly watching, suddenly runs toward the house, and looks toward the left, very expectantly.* MRS. ROTT *rushes in without a word and snatches a pillow from the cart.* ROTT *enters at the same time from the left, his dead boy in his arms, tenderly puts him down.* MRS. ROTT *has put the pillow under* COCK-SPARROW'S *head.*]

TROOPER. Is he alive?

ROTT (*drives the* TROOPER *away, wild and threatening like a cornered beast*). Oh you! Don't you dare to come too near! (*Working about the boy, whom he shakes. Trembling but quiet.*) Cock-Sparrow! My Cock-Sparrow.

MRS. ROTT. He does not move.

ROTT. The big mill wheel hit him over the head, just once. (*Shakes him more violently than before.*) Cock-Sparrow, dear little hot-head! Do move. (*Shakes him ever more vigorously.*) Come now, you little romp! (*Ceases his useless work.*) He is gone! (*Pause, then roaring in a wild agony of grief.*) My Cock-Sparrow, my little hot-head, my little bull! (*Rushes onto the* TROOPER *overcome by his thirst for revenge.*) Now we two'll grow together! Peasant and Trooper!

[*Wild wrestling ensues.*]

MRS. ROTT. Tear out his heart and wipe his mouth with it.

ROTT (*holding the* TROOPER *by the throat*). Peasant and Trooper! . . . (*Bears him down.*)

TROOPER (*on the ground, tries in vain to escape from the iron grasp of his opponent*). Damned fist of a peasant.

ROTT (*breathing vengeance*). Peasants have gripping claws, haven't they? (*Has completely subdued him and is kneeling on his breast, shouts vindictively.*) Trooper, now you're mine!

MRS. ROTT (*who has picked up the* TROOPER'S *sword unsheathes it and hands it to* ROTT). There, kill him like a beast.

ROTT (*does not take the sword*). The sword is no weapon for a peasant. Give me the axe. (*In beastly thirst of blood.*) With the axe I'll kill him.

[MRS. ROTT, *tearing the axe from the cherry-tree, where* ROTT *had put it.*]

TROOPER (*on whose breast* ROTT *is kneeling, tries once to rise with a sudden effort*). God's martyr, Devil and Death!

ROTT (*holding him firmly by the throat*). Bloodhound, die!

TROOPER (*gurgling*). Holy Virgin, then I'll die thy faithful knight.

MRS. ROTT (*handing* ROTT *the axe*). Here! [*When he does not at once take it.*] Hit him!

ROTT (*kneeling on the* TROOPER *and suddenly coming to his senses, shakes his head. Slowly he releases the* TROOPER *and rises*). Not so! Christ's command says naught of blood.

[MRS. ROTT *is astonished. The axe drops from her hand.* TROOPER *rises to his knee, then quickly jumps up, snatches up his sword and is, for a moment, on the point of rushing upon* ROTT. *Then he stops, watchful, resting on his sword.*]

ROTT (*speaking to the dead boy*). Cock-Sparrow, you are going with us after all. (*To his wife.*) Help me. [*They carefully pick up the boy and place him in the cart.*] Father'll have company. He won't have to lie alone in a strange country. (*To* MRS. ROTT, *pointing to the sticks smeared with bird lime.*) Put the sticks in the cart by his side.

[MRS. ROTT *does as he requests.*]

Rott. He won't catch any more birds — "That we may have with us — on the trip . . . something that can sing!"

Mrs. Rott (*carefully covers the boy and then, urgently*). But now, Christopher, let's be gone. The ground is burning under my feet.

Rott (*stands as if engaged in a hard struggle with himself. Gives a slanting look at the* Trooper, *as if he still had something hard to say to him. His fists are tightly closed; to himself*). It is hard, tremendously hard.

Mrs. Rott (*when she sees* Rott *hesitate*). Why do you delay?

Rott (*slowly*). I'm following the gospel of Christ, and am searching for it. Therefore I will do . . . according to God's word, which says: (*Grinding his teeth.*) Forgive your enemy. (*Squinting at the* Trooper.) It is hard, tremendously hard. [*Tries to stretch out his hand to the* Trooper, *but every time it is convulsively shut again into a fist. Finally under the pressure of a tremendous spiritual force his fist opens. Breathing deeply, and looking at the* Trooper, Rott *extends to him his hand.*) Here — is my hand. Who wants it . . . may take it.

[Trooper, *hesitatingly and almost against his will, is groping for* Rott's *hand.*]

Mrs. Rott (*glancing up at* Rott *in great astonishment*). Christopher, you are truly more than human!

Rott. As long as my inside (*pointing to his heart*) is clean, no Trooper can break me or bend me. [*Stepping to the cart ready to start. He is no longer weighed down, but carries himself erect.*] Wife, push on! We are off to seek a new home!

[*Pushing the cart ahead of him he disappears with his wife across the bridge in the direction of the highway.* Trooper *looks after* Rott *until he has disappeared. Then he leans his sword against the ground, and giving it a furious kick breaks it.*]

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